★ FIRST FOR FULL REVIEWS!

A NEWSFIELD PUBLICATION
NO. 62 MARCH 1989
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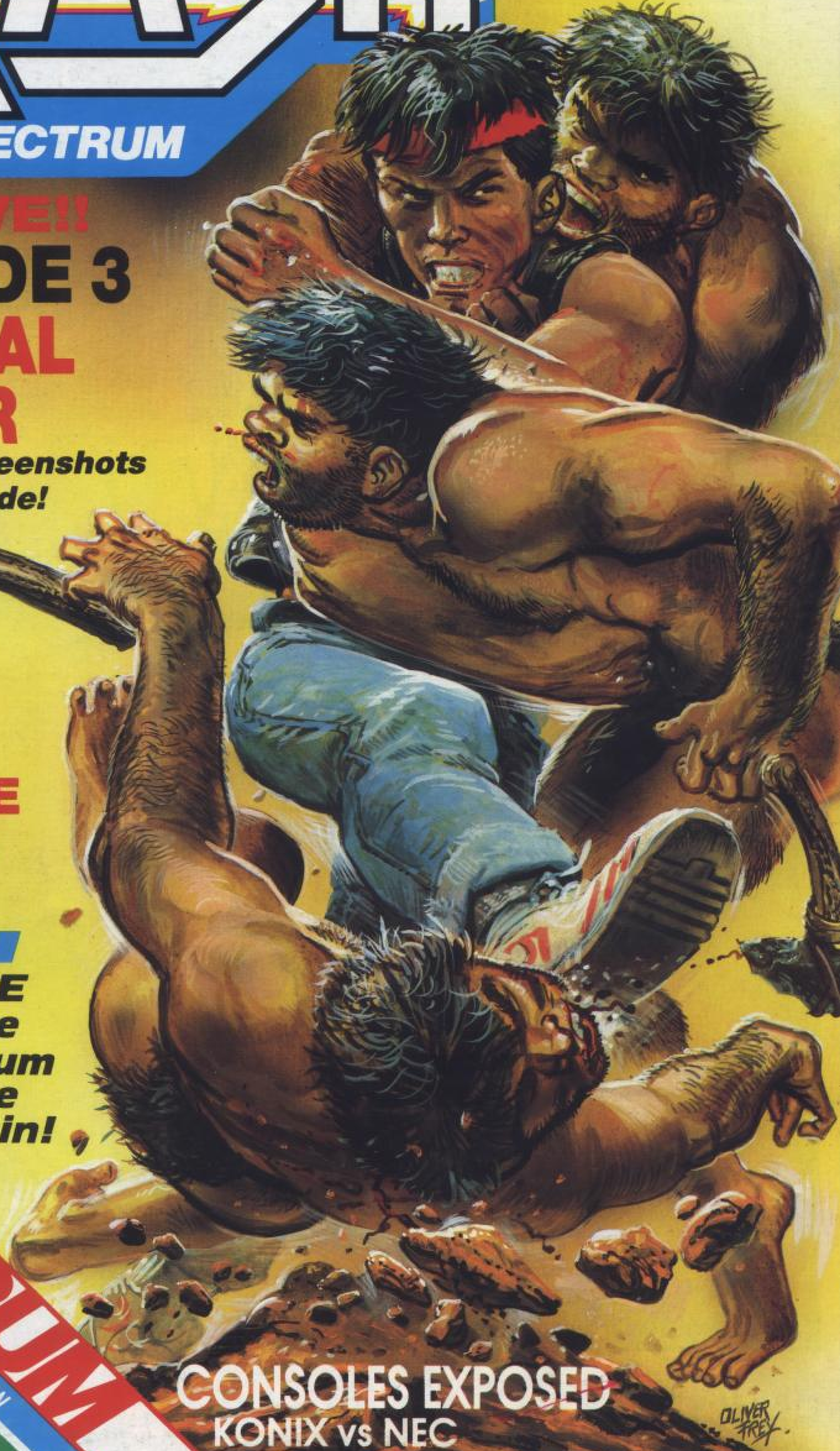
CRASH

ZX SPECTRUM

EXCLUSIVE!!

RENEGADE 3 -THE FINAL CHAPTER

First screenshots inside!



EXCLUSIVE SMASHES!!

RUN THE GAUNTLET

INCREDIBLE SHRINKING SPHERE

EXCLUSIVE NEWS INSIDE!

***ULTIMATE* play the Spectrum game again!**

CONSOLES EXPOSED

KONIX vs NEC

SPECTRUM

MONTHLY SPECTRUM SOFTWARE REVIEW

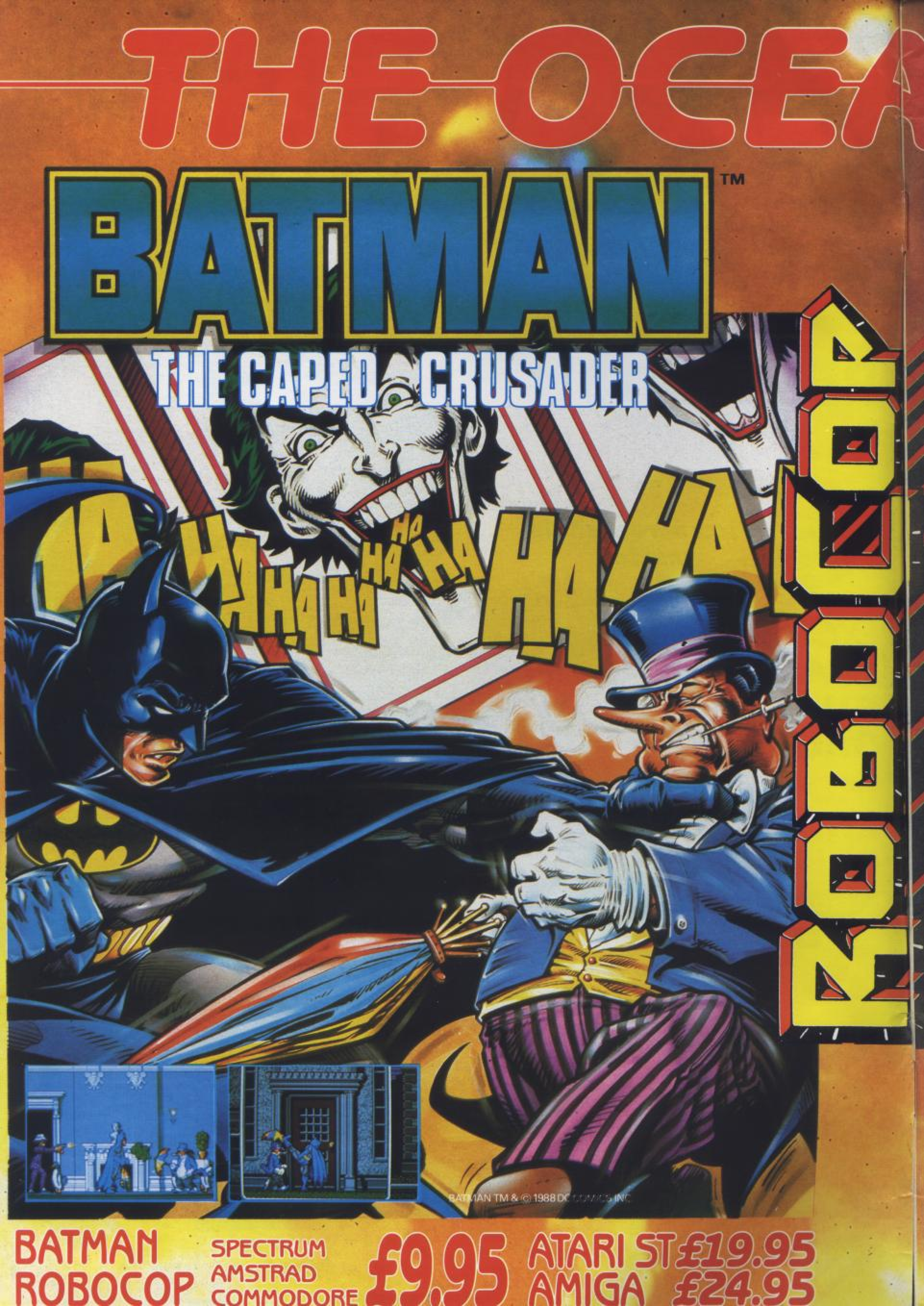
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★ SATELLITE DISH!

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CRASH

ZX SPECTRUM

CONTENTS

All good things must come to an end, and after more than four years working on CRASH (in various capacities, from teaboy to editor) I've decided to hang up my joystick (and if anyone says 'oo-er' or 'fnar' I shall smack them one!) and call it a day. And I shall really miss the Spectrum scene . . .

They say that editing CRASH is like being Dr. Who in charge of the Tardis, each new editor is younger than the last – but seeing as I was only 19 when I took hold of this massive organ (insert YS or SU innuendo here) and Nick Roberts doesn't fancy the idea of doing some proper work, it won't happen this time. For next month, 'old' Stuart Wynne moves into the hot seat – he's had a Spectrum from the year dot, so his credentials are impeccable. Stu's a nice chap, so keep him in employment and tell all your friends to forget the competition and buy CRASH instead!

But, do not FEAR mother, for I shall be MOVIEing onto Newsfield's non-computer titles, Movie – The Video Magazine and Fear (horror and fantasy). (In fact I'm only two floors away from the CRASH office!) I hope to see you all in their hallowed pages next month. (Okay?) So, not till next munf . . .

Dom Handy

CRASH – THE MOST UP-TO-DATE COMPUTER MAGAZINE

We've always said that our reviews are the most unbiased around. But what some people forget is that we're also the most up-to-date magazine around. This month we have first screenshots of *Renegade 3* and *Red Heat*; stop press reviews of *Run The Gauntlet* and *Incredible Shrinking Sphere*, and EXCLUSIVE news on the greatest Spectrum software house, Ultimate – Play The Game. You can get cassettes any day, but CRASH is where it's at for the latest info!

COIN-OPS COMPACT

The ultimate home arcade experience has been unveiled – or so Konix claim. We take the wraps off one of the most hyped pieces of hardware in the world and ask whether the Konix Multi-System really is as good as they say, and is what they say true?

'The best console available today!', is the view of the CRASH team. With the console market really hotting up, we review NEC's PC Engine which is now available in Britain. WARNING: please do not get too upset when you see the screenshots, thank you . . .



CRAZY COMPS

ISSUE 63
APRIL ISSUE
ON SALE
MARCH 30

INSIDE . . .

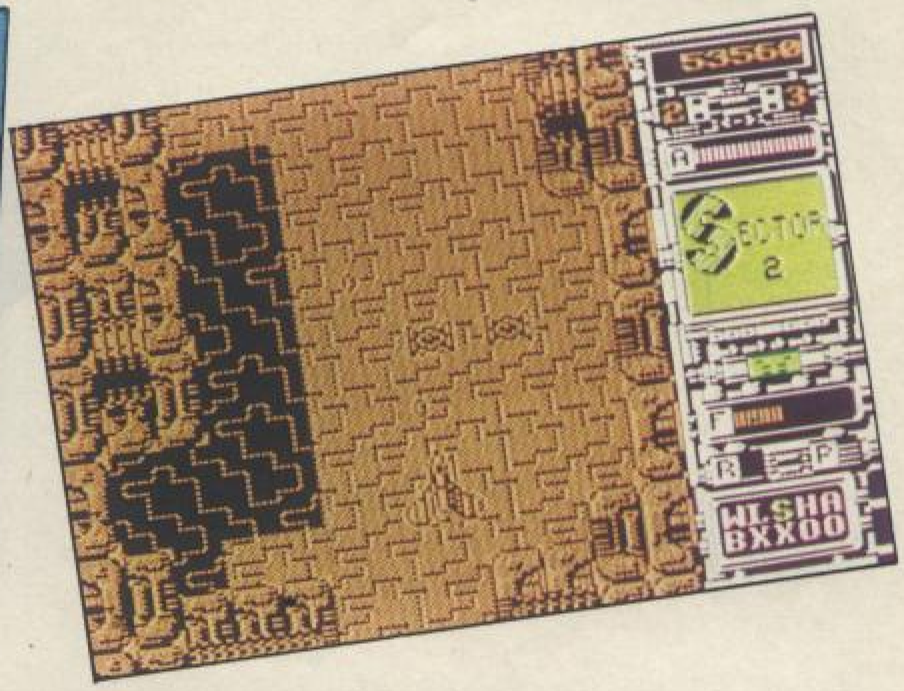
REVIEWS

Martian offerings . . . SMASHED!





HOT SHOTS 80% and over . . .



FULL INDEX

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COMPETITION RULES The Editor's decision is final in all matters relating to adjudication and while we offer prizes in good faith, believing them to be available, if something untoward happens (like a game that has been offered as a prize being scrapped) we reserve the right to substitute prizes of comparable value. We'll do our very best to despatch prizes as soon as possible after the published closing date. Winners names will appear in a later issue of CRASH. No correspondence can be entered into regarding the competitions (unless we've written to you stating that you have won a prize and it doesn't turn up, in which case drop The Sticky Solutions Department a line at the PO Box 10 address). No person who has any relationship, no matter how remote, to anyone who works for either Newsfield or any of the companies offering prizes, may enter one of our competitions. No material may be reproduced in part or in whole without the written consent of the copyright-holders. We cannot undertake to return anything sent into CRASH including written and photographic material, hardware or software – unless it is accompanied by a suitably stamped, addressed envelope. Unsolicited written or photographic material is welcome, and if used in the magazine is paid for at our current rates.

To DW and DB, thanks for the good times!

NEWSFIELD

A NEWSFIELD PUBLICATION

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COVER DESIGN & ILLUSTRATION BY OLIVER FREY

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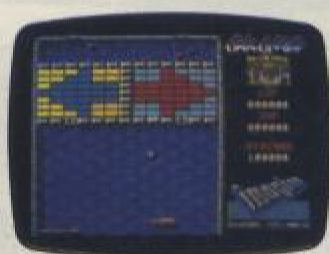
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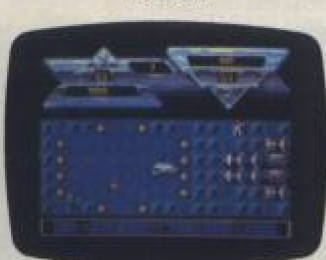

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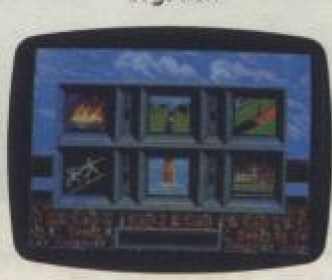

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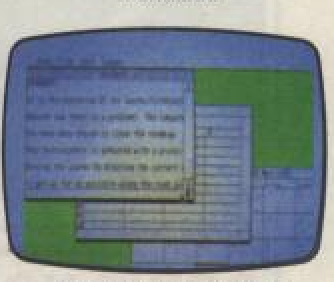

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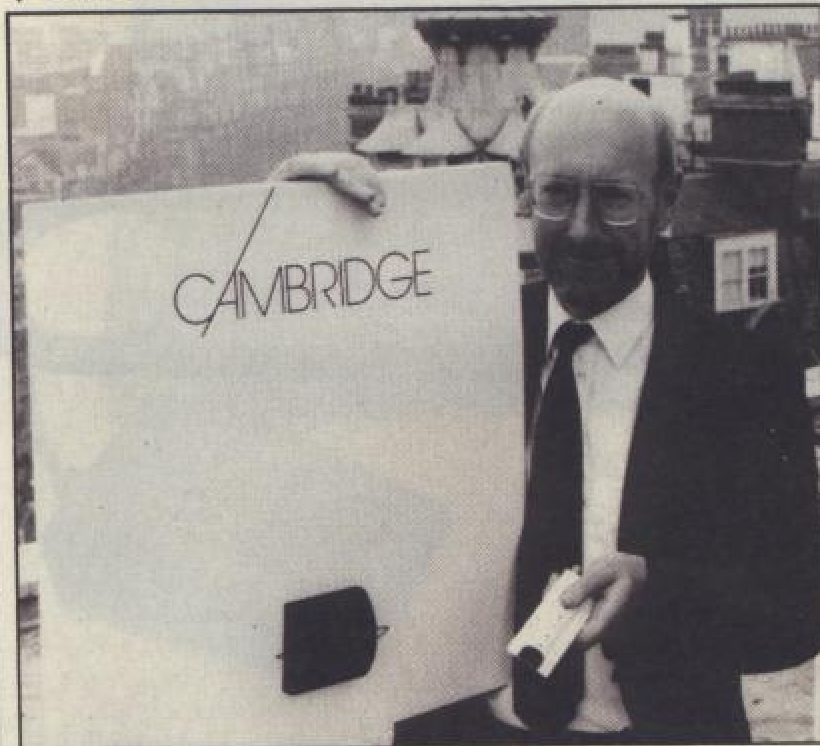
NEWS

SINCLAIR'S NEW MODELS

SIR CLIVE SINCLAIR has been at it again! His Cambridge-based microchip firm Anamartic is preparing to launch a new chip: the wafer-scale integration (WSI) memory device. This is promised to be entirely grease-free and is apparently excellent with oodles of salt and vinegar. It should also allow processor and memory chips to be combined for extra taste.

Apparently the WSI will transform fast-food computing. But Sir Clive has been turning his attention to more pressing matters. In June, he's wiring up his circuits (ie, getting married) to beautiful ex-model, Bernadette Tynan. According to The Mail On Sunday, the couple met through MENSA, the society for really brainy sods. Bernadette's IQ is only five points less than Clive's. Contrarily, her age is less than half his – it all goes to show that Clive is still an expert in vital statistics.

▼ Brains over brains



BE A MOTORMOUTH

IF YOU watch ITV's *Motormouth* on Saturday mornings, you'll no doubt have spotted the section featuring Firebird's odd arcade adventure, *Weird Dreams*. A viewer is phoned and asked general knowledge questions. If the viewer gets the answer right, the game's main character proceeds to the next level. Mega-amazing, you're thinking, but so what? Well, the good news is that *Weird Dreams* is coming soon to your Spectrum. So prepare yourself for some Speccy surrealism within the next few months. Meanwhile, you can experience weird dreams while watching *Motormouth* itself – it sends most people off to the land of Nod.



▲ You too can have weird dreams

BOB'S YOUR UNCLE

Eyes down for a full house, Domark have been revealed as the software house responsible for bringing Bob Monkhouse to the Spectrum. *Bob's Full House* is the name, and bingo's the game. So apart from winning a positive parade of pretend prizes, we'll be able to sample a wealth of wit from the master of innuendo himself. So fingers on the buzzers . . . I said buzzers, madam, smirk smirk . . . glazed look at the camera, wait for canned laughter.

1988 PR Girl of the Year

After so much argument about sexism in software the Ed's decided it's all a load of boulderdash (or words to that effect). So we've decided to award those hard-working girls that slave over a hot phone from dawn until dusk, trying to convince everyone that *their* product is much better than everyone else's. Never mind what they're called – Marketing Assistants, Promotions Coordinators, Press Liaison Officers –, they're all basically PR girlies. They all have a special talent which sets them apart from the big cheeses – they can tell you all about a uninteresting game, but still bring a smile to your face on a rainy Friday night.

And so to the awards . . . In reverse order, third place goes to **Richard** 'your secret's safe with me, m'love' **Barclay** from gorgeous Gremlin Graphics, with luscious **Liz Sandey** from Cascade Games coming in a seductive second. And the coveted award of CRASH **1988 PR Girl Of The Year** goes to the delectable **Danielle Woodyatt** from US Gold for her dedicated devotion to software promotion. As well as the prestigious award, Danielle also gets to review a game of her own choice within this very issue. Danielle chose *Human Killing Machine*, turn to page 15 for her unbiased opinion . . .



▲ 'What can I say?'

SCOT LOSES HANDY HELP



▶ Dave Baxter flanked by fellow software developers – just another Handy PR stunt?

AS A DIRECT consequence of Dominic Handy leaving CRASH, a mega industry figure has suffered. As US Gold's Software Manager, **David Baxter**'s whole career has been expertly fashioned by the promotional skills of Handy. It is rumoured that the CRASH Ed took this 'poor, pathetic excuse for a pile of trash' from the lochs of Scotland and introduced him to computers in the mid-1980s. Handy could see that Baxter had an eye for the market when he got his first steady job at Elite. At least Mr Baxter thought it was steady. Little was he to know that Handy was already sculpting a new career for him at Birmingham-based US Gold, as head of the Capcom/Rainbow Arts labels.

Although suffering at the beginning of 1988, Handy's flamboyant skills were realised in August 1988 when he chose Rainbow Arts' *The Great Giana Sisters* as cover-picture material for CRASH. The game was immediately banned when rivals complained that the CRASH cover was so good it would convince too many people to buy the game – the complainants ruled 'unfair promotion'. Baxter was propelled to stardom as the producer of the game, with classic quotes like 'Nintendo are getting heavy!'.

Little was the world to know that more was to come from the fiendish mind of Handy . . . Just four months later, David Baxter was propelled to MEGA-stardom when Rainbow Arts produced *Katakis*. It was so good that the courts had to completely ban it. The seed had again been sown with CRASH's sister magazine ZZAP!64/AMIGA/FISH, featuring the shoot'-em-up on its cover.

How will quotes like '*Human Killing Machine* will knock your head off and slash your throat' come from the mouth of Baxter without the genius of Handy behind him? We don't know, but we wish both halves of the promotional duo a successful year.

RARE
DESIGNS ON THE FUTURE

ULTIMATE TO BECOME LESS RARE

ULTIMATE: PLAY THE GAME, one of the most successful and exciting software labels in Spectrum history, has been resurrected by the company behind the games; **Ashby Computers and Graphics**. Just over six months ago ACG bought back full right rights to the label and began developing games for it. The first Spectrum releases are due out in several months, and there is a strong likelihood that **Jetman**, and even **Sabreman**, will be featured.

Ultimate was started up by two coin-op game writers, **Tim and Chris Stamper**, with the ambitious aim of bring original, arcade-style games to the Spectrum. Their success was phenomenal and from 1983 to 1986 Ultimate lived up to their name with every release Smashed. Then came the decision to sell minority rights of the label to US Gold and the move to the village of Twycross where ACG could concentrate on developing games for the Nintendo under the **Rare: Designs On The Future** label. There were around 15 million Nintendos in the world then, and no software piracy. Since then the Nintendo market exploded into a multi-billion dollar industry in the US, and Rare are among its top games writers. In 1988 they invited ex-CRASH editor **Roger Kean** to their Twycross offices to give CRASH the full story. The break with the normal, ultra-low media profile was due to a desire to attract more programmers to write for Rare, and also the Razz board – the heart of an ACG developed coin-op machine.

Back in 1988 ACG denied they had any plans to write for the relatively small ST/Amiga, but this has now changed and all the Ultimate releases will appear first on the 16-bit machines, with 8-bit conversions to follow. Most of the games will be original titles – no Nintendo conversions – but there will also be coin-op conversions. This break in tradition is due to the fact ACG will be launching their own coin-op games in the US this month.

ACG now employ 43 programmers and are determined to maintain their unparalleled standards. Chris Stamper, the programmer of the original hits, will be doing some of the programming himself. CRASH certainly looks forward to the new releases with great eagerness, the Ultimate brand of mystique and sheer playability has been missing from the Spectrum for far too long.

SERIOUS UPOLOGY

We hereby apologise profoundly to *Sinclair User* for printing an article about the new SAM Coupé – last year. We didn't realise that they had an 'exclusive' on it in their February 1989 issue. 'Exclusive! . . . At last! Details and pics', they claimed on last month's front cover. Sorry to say this but CRASH first printed details of SAM in January 1988! With a screen picture in Issue 50 (March of 1988!). Well I suppose if you took a year to get something it would be 'At last!'.

So to prove just how sorry we are, we're sending a stack of games to exigent editor Graham Taylor. What's more, they're on his favourite format: Atari ST!

8 THINGS YOU NEVER WANTED TO KNOW ABOUT OUR DEPARTING ED

★ Dom was born in a banana crate on the way to his dad's fruit shop.
★ His first experience of computers occurred at playgroup, where he reviewed *Push The Beads* on an abacus – 'Nice graphics but a bit repetitive.'
★ He has actually gone off Tiffany, ever since she sang a duet with Des O'Connor.
★ He keeps a cuddly toy tiger in his Fiesta – 'Fluffy dice are so naff and also don't deter thieves.'
★ Dominic's all-time favourite phrase is 'Damn that silly Production Manager' (or words to similar effect).
★ He once almost bought a Metro made out of five different cars; he can't stand the sight of Metros to this day.
★ He claims to have seen every film ever made, except *Gremlins* for some strange reason.
★ Dom has a psychotic desire to destroy all telephones, joysticks and secretaries by twisting them and banging them on his desk.
(That's it, I'm off – Ed.)

Courtesy of Phil King 'it doesn't matter what I print, he's buggering off!' Market Research

INTERESTING MARK CASWELL FACTS: Number 1

Ummm . . . we can't think of any. If you know anything the slightest bit interesting about Mark we'd be glad to hear from you.




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THE KONIX ARCADE EXPERIENCE





A revolution in home entertainment has, according to Konix, just been launched at the British International Toy & Hobby Fair. The mould breaking machine responsible is the Konix Multi-System. For just under £200 this strangely shaped console offers amazingly fast graphics and CD quality sound. Yet software will cost just £14.99 when it is launched with a massive TV advertising campaign in six months time.

The steely grey coloured console comes complete not only with a joystick but also with motorbike handlebars and a steering wheel, making



for one of the most bizarre-looking machines since the C5 electric trike. Inside this weird exterior is a 16-bit 8086 processor, but the real power comes from a custom-built chip developed in conjunction with Flare – a group of Sinclair hardware designers fired by Alan Sugar while working on the 'Super Spectrum' Loki. Multiplication instruction is claimed to be 50 times faster than possible with the chip used in the ST and Amiga. 4096 colours are available, with a maximum screen resolution of 512x200. The most likely games playing mode will have a large range of colours (16 per line), with Spectrum standard resolution. Sound will be in stereo and of CD quality. And, as was demonstrated at the show, these chips can produce mindblowing demos.

Powerful custom chips are, of course, also used by Japanese 'super-consoles' such as the PC Engine and Sega Megadrive. Unlike these machines Multi-System software will come not on ROM chips (permanent memory chips which need only to be plugged in to start a game), but on disks. This means games will have to be loaded into the machine's internal RAM, which amounts to just 128K – and some Multi-System screens can use 50K without anything moving. This would seem to place severe restrictions on Multi-System games. Konix claim to have got around them, however, by having the Multi-System constantly access the internal, 880K disk drive. How successful this idea will be has yet to be seen, but Konix do plan to offer memory upgrade cartridges – if RAM chip prices fall.

The most eye-catching Konix innovations, however, will be the wide range of peripherals. Different control devices can be attached to the console and will actually give physical feedback, so if you car goes over a rough bit of road the steering wheel will actually judder. Also available will be a lightgun (with recoil action), foot pedals, 3-D glasses and an arcade-action chair for around £170. In addition two Multi-Systems can be linked for two-player games.

The most critical aspect of any new computer or console, however, is always software support and besides producing software themselves, Konix already have twenty software houses signed up, including Electronic Arts, US Gold and Ocean. When the machine is put on sale in August there will be 15 games available, and forty are promised for Christmas. By the time you read this software programmers will have met with Konix technical staff to be briefed on the machine's specifications.

To briefly recap, the Konix Multi-System offers amazing graphics and sound for £199, amazing peripherals and £14.99 software. Clearly if it delivers what it promises gamesplaying could be revolutionized. The continual disk access system does seem strange, but if there are any problems hopefully they should be solved by the launch date which is six agonizing months away – six hours would be too long in our opinion!







A CRASH Smash

Run The «GAUNTLET»

● *Take on the professionals*

Producer **Ocean**
Petrol **£8.99 cass**
£14.99 disk
Author **Impact Software**

Hi, I'm Martin Shaw, and I'm standing here looking sickeningly fit and healthy waiting to take you through the many gruelling courses that make up *Run The Gauntlet.* The challenge is divided into three events, each made up of three segments (picked at random on the +3) which can be Road Racing, Water Racing or The Hill assault course – all are separate loads. For the waterborne race there's hovercraft, speed boats, jet skies, and inflatable boats. These all have their own handling characteristics and also their own particular race course. For the muddy track races there's two-man buggies, one-man buggies, four-wheel bikes and amphibious six-wheeled vehicles. There are two courses for these machines. And as for the assault courses . . . I'm afraid you have to use your own legs for the two different layouts.

Four teams can take part in the challenge, three of which can be human while one is always a computer pacer. If more than one human is taking part, game segments are repeated to allow the additional player(s) to have a go as well.

The waterborne race is presented in overhead, smoothly-scrolling fashion. It looks easy but the characteristics of the vehicles are tricky, collisions with other vehicles or land leads to spins, and there's some attractive explosions to throw you off course. Left/right controls direction and forward/reverse controls speed. A map shows your position and you obviously must stick to the course.

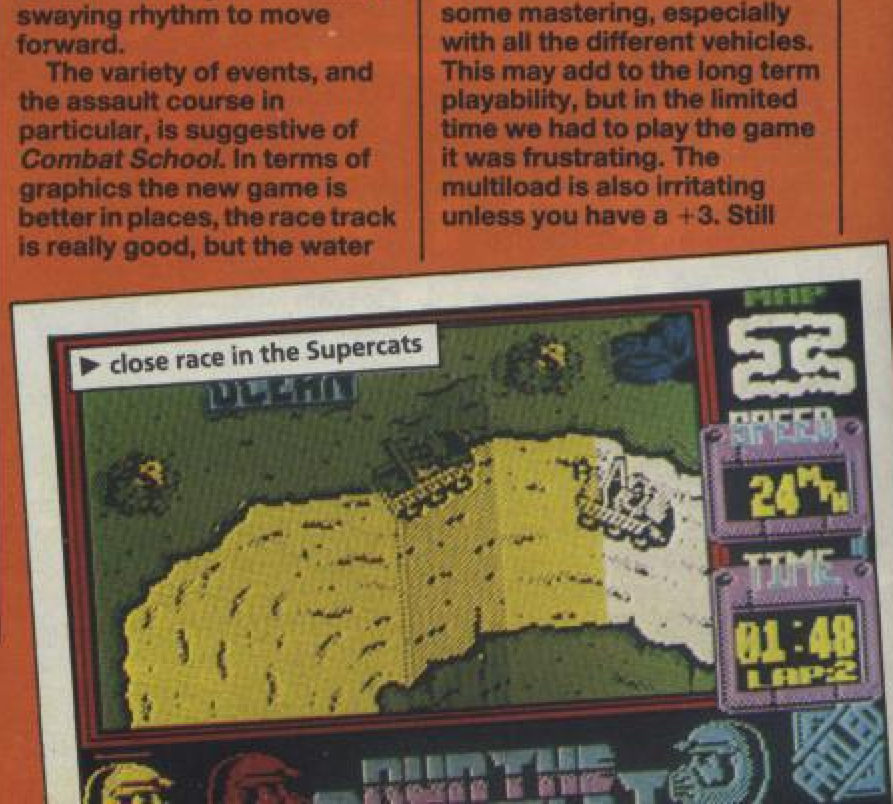


▶ All three inflatables in another tight race

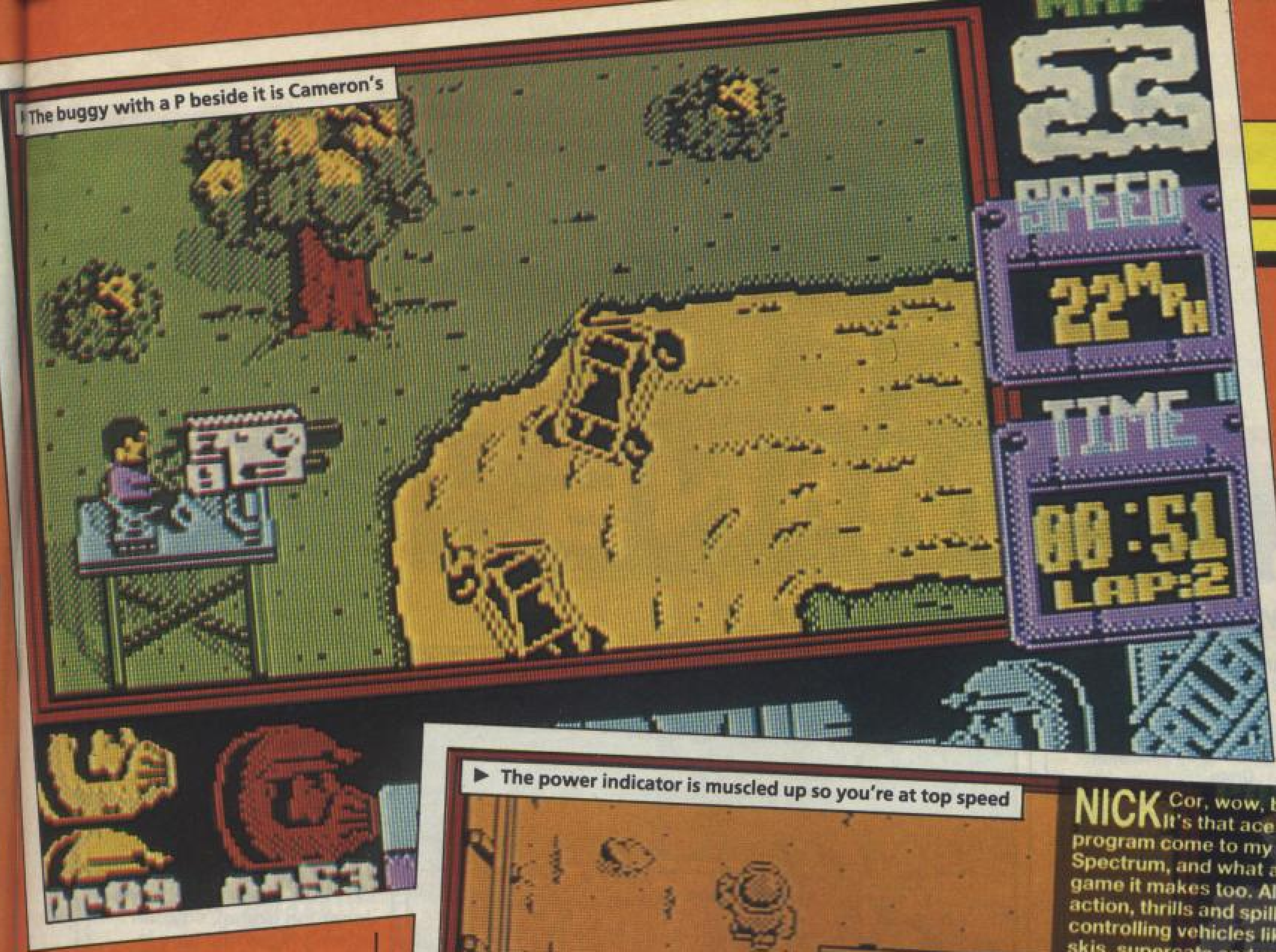
Similar controls and a mini-map insert are carried through to track racing. However, the view of the course is flickscreen and more angled. The map is useful to anticipate bends and hills, while explosions again prove to be a nasty hazard. Probably the most graphically attractive section this is also the most fun to play.

The toughest section, however, is The Hill. Here the view is again overhead and smooth-scrolling, but totally monochromatic one. The course includes muddy pits, slippery logs over water, nets and water cannons sweeping over the course to try and knock you over. Pressing left/right controls direction, fire and up makes you jump, while left/right with fire increases power (how fast you run). But if you fall in the water or mud you have to time left/right actions so that you establish a swaying rhythm to move forward.

The variety of events, and the assault course in particular, is suggestive of *Combat School.* In terms of graphics the new game is better in places, the race track is really good, but the water course is a bit primitive looking. My problem with the game, though, lay with the controls which really took some mastering, especially with all the different vehicles. This may add to the long term playability, but in the limited time we had to play the game it was frustrating. The multiload is also irritating unless you have a +3. Still



▶ close race in the Supercats



The buggy with a P beside it is Cameron's



▶ The power indicator is muscled up so you're at top speed

there's a heckuva lot of game here for your money and I'm certainly going to keep playing until I can go through the race track without crashing too much.

MARK 85%

NICK Cor, wow, blimey! It's that ace telly program come to my Spectrum, and what a brill game it makes too. All the action, thrills and spills of controlling vehicles like jet skis, supercats and speed boats have been excellently captured by Ocean. Each section has detailed vehicles and backgrounds, while colour is restricted to the borders, livening things up but remaining colour-clash free. Aural colour is provided by the catchy *Run The Gauntlet* tune, spurring the players on to get a better time, but unfortunately there are no sound effects. My only real quibble, though, is the small matter of the explosions, I thought they were only TV special FX. But if you get stuck over one in the game it blows you back into the last screen. This is an excellent game, so go and *Run The Gauntlet*, NOW!

92%

SHAW TO WIN

- On the track section, avoid contact with other vehicles at all costs – be patient and wait for an opportunity to overtake.
- Before racing on the water, memorise the course from the map.
- Don't play with a joystick, it's too awkward – use the keyboard instead.
- Anticipate corners on the track and take the inside line around them.
- Explosions tend to occur in the middle of the track, so keep to the side.
- When crossing logs on The Hill, account for the water coming from the water cannons – move against it.
- Also on The Hill, try to avoid the water pools which slow you down.

I must confess to only having watched the TV show a couple of times – I preferred the similar *Superchamps* on Channel 4 – but this game is making me a fan. All the events are here, and well implemented too. I especially like the buggies as they zoom over hills and swerve round corners. The graphics in all events are fine, even though the water sections look (and play) just like Code Masters' *Jetbike Simulator*. Then there's that great 128K ingame tune. But apart from technical excellence, it's the sheer range of playable sections that makes *Run The Gauntlet* one of the best multi-event games for a long time.

PHIL 90%

THE ESSENTIALS

Joysticks: Cheetah Special, Cursor, Kempston, Sinclair
Graphics: mainly monochromatic, overhead view
Sound: good, continuous ingame theme
Options: up to three players, choice of country
General rating: an excellent Spectrum version of the adrenalin-pumping TV series



Presentation	92%
Graphics	88%
Sound	90%
Playability	89%
Addictive qualities	90%

OVERALL 90%



WEC LE MANS

● ***Will you want to play this for 24 hours?***

Producer **Imagine**
Miles per gallon **£8.95 cass**
£14.95 disk
Author **Sentient Software, sound by Jonathon Dunn**

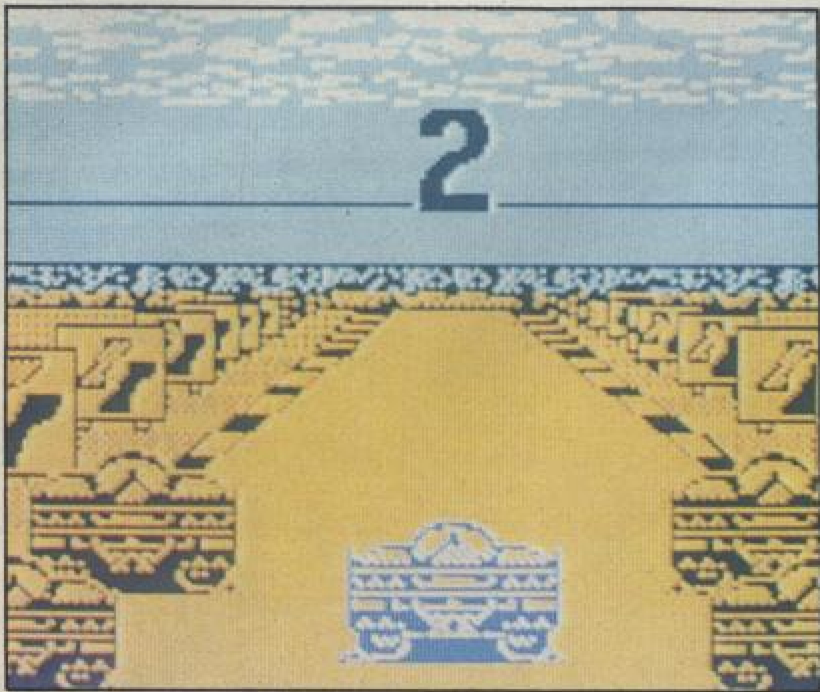
The 24 hour WEC Le Mans race is one of the toughest in motor racing. Konami attempted to give the thrills, without 24 hour play, in an impressive hydraulic cabinet which just lost out to *Out Run*. A year after the disappointing *Out Run* conversion, Imagine hope the arcade runner-up will beat the arcade champion on the Spectrum . . .

As with the arcade machine, the number of laps seems drastically reduced – just four. Getting you there in style is a turbocharged engine with high and low gears – press fire to change up or down. Forward on the joystick accelerates, backwards applies the brakes vital for tight, hairpin bends and edging past competitor cars.

Each lap is divided into three checkpoints and you start with just 66 seconds to reach the first checkpoint. If you reach it with lots of time in hand, your time limit for the next checkpoint is increased. Fail to reach it and you're out of the race. If you crash along the way the timer kindly stops until you're moved back onto the road, but getting back up to speed takes time you can't afford to lose.

Another tough race game, but much older, is *Full Throttle*. Despite that game's simple visual charms, *WEC Le Mans* beats it hands down for looks, with well-defined graphics whizzing past at great speed and – unlike *Enduro Racer* – no confusing overlaps. Also like *Full Throttle* it remembers the competitor cars, so you can catch up with those two drivers who caused you to crash. But otherwise this is far inferior. For a start there's only one track which little resembles the map layout, then there's dodgy collision detection and only one (far too tough) skill level, severely limiting lastability. *WEC Le Mans* is great fun to play for a while, but I suspect it will soon end up gathering dust.

MARK 69%



▲ Better programmed than *Out Run*, but less variety

DRIVING LESSONS

- Don't just hold down accelerate, when a car looms up decelerate and go in the opposite direction to pass.
- Always start in low gear and change into high, it saves time accelerating.
- Try not to oversteer as it causes you to skid.
- Never drink and drive! (These tips are getting silly! – Ed.)

The inlay calls it the most gruelling and challenging car race in the world and I definitely agree; I was sure my wrist was going to snap on some of those corners, and completing each sector is really demanding. *WEC Le Mans* gives you a fast, roller coaster ride around a very plain track with just a few spark plug advertisements to cheer it up. But even though the variety is lacking, I kept coming back for more (psycho?). On the negative side, sound is surprisingly poor and as the race is supposed to be 24 hours long you would have thought it would get darker – like in the arcade game – but the Spectrum programmers seem to have overlooked this (at least in the first 3 laps). *WEC Le Mans* has nothing particularly outstanding about it, but it's a great way to let off steam.

NICK 69%



▲ Roaring around the famous Le Mans circuit in top gear

MIKE **I don't think I've got any relatives called Jonathon (Dunn), so I can safely say his title tune is pretty dull, while ingame FX are almost nonexistent. Sadly, *WEC Le Mans* has got nothing I haven't seen before; the hills are very effective, but so were *Enduro Racer*'s and that's got much more content. The colour clash on the sides of the road is pretty unpleasant, and as for the collision detection – well! I counted four slip-ups (ie, straight up someone else's exhaust pipe!) in one go, and my games aren't remarkably long, believe me! Nine pounds could buy a lot more.**

59%

THE ESSENTIALS

Joysticks: Cursor, Kempston, Sinclair
Graphics: smooth-scrolling track but general lack of variety in appearance
Sound: adequate 128K title tune, but poorish ingame engine noises
Options: definable keys
General rating: technically competent, but has too little game content

Presentation	73%
Graphics	70%
Sound	67%
Playability	70%
Addictive qualities	65%

OVERALL 66%

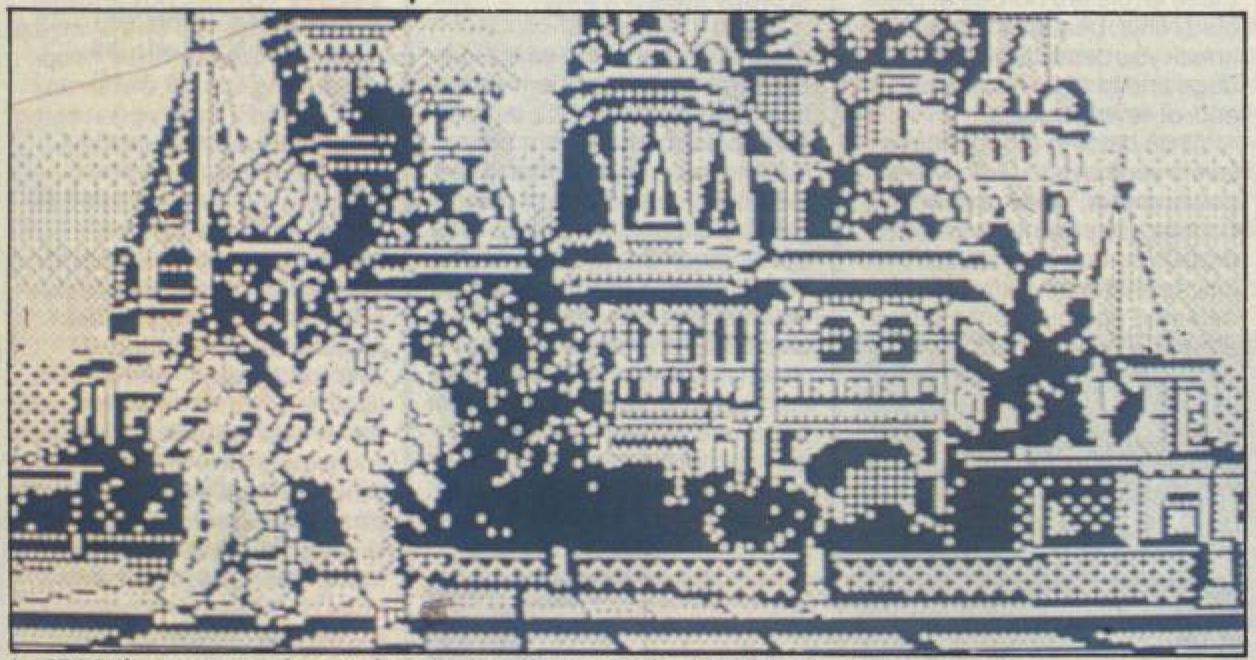
Producer **GO!/US Gold**
Exchange rate **£8.99 cass**
£12.99 disk
Author **Tiertex**

THE HUMAN KILLING MACHINE

● ***Judith not-very-Charming***

And to think how overjoyed I was when I discovered I'd won a round-the-world trip on *Trick Or Treat*. The trip of a lifetime which has turned into a nightmare . . .

First stop was the beautiful city of Moscow. There I was, admiring the Kremlin when a huge, Russian soldier hit me with his rifle. Well I wasn't going to stand for that, was I? So I swiftly kicked him in the Gulags and



▲ **CRASH's newest, and most glamorous reviewer thinks this is 'the best game ever'**

finished him off with a flying chop – my black belt in karate sometimes comes in useful!

I swiftly moved on to Red Square where I was just eating my pickled cabbage butties when my peace was disturbed yet again, this time by a vicious mutt. His dog tag told me his name was Shepski, but John Noakeski was nowhere to be seen. Anyway, I thought I'd better give the dog some Barbara Woodhouse-style training. So I kicked and punched him until he responded to my 'down' command – permanently.

After being deported, I arrived in Amsterdam. Looking for a bit of culture, I ventured into the famous red light district. Here, I met a gorgeous young female by the name of Maria. This is more like it, I thought. But alas she was into sadism, jumping around, trying to kick the living daylights out of me.

My troubles still weren't over after I'd seen off her advances. Blubberguts Helga decided to have her wicked way with me, but I managed to escape to Barcelona. I was relaxing at a local bullfight when, you guessed it, Miguel the Toreador, took a disliking to me. Worse still, his prize bull Brutus charged at me – he obviously liked my red shirt.

By contrast, Germany seemed a tranquil place, until beer-swilling Hans and Franz the glass-throwing waiter spoiled everything. And what better place to go for a quiet time than the peaceful city of Beirut?! A fanatic Arab and another huge hulk weren't taking any prisoners (or hostages).

So would I advise you to take such an exhausting trip? Well, the scenery's really beautiful and the large characters are well drawn and animated. But beating seven bells out of the natives does become a mite tiresome and repetitive. Judith Chalmers never has these problems. Wish you were here? Well, it's a fair old beat-'em-up but nothing spectacularly new.

PHIL 69%



DANIELLE **Wow! What can I say? I never normally play computer games, but in US Gold's case I ALWAYS make an exception. They continually seem to produce such technically well-programmed and SUPERBLY-MARKETED products, it's a surprise they haven't taken over the whole software industry. *HKM* (as we call it in the trade) is one of those products that jumps out of the screen at you, kicks you to the ground and says, 'Play this, or I'll smash your face in!' – it's just so good. As the screenshots show, the graphics speak for themselves – in fact with backgrounds this lifelike I'm amazed you're not required to show your passport when purchasing it. Forget Roger the Renegade and Bob the Barbarian; Kwon is THE lean, mean fighting machine. Go out and buy *Human Killing Machine* now! I won't regret it!**

99.9%

PS: Don't forget *Thunder Blade, LED Storm, Last Duel* . . . (that's enough – Ed.)

THE ESSENTIALS

Joysticks: Kempston, Sinclair
Graphics: detailed backgrounds and well-drawn, large sprites
Sound: usual biffing effects
General rating: a standard, but attractive, beat-'em-up. Lacking in originality, but still very addictive

Presentation	70%
Graphics	79%
Sound	61%
Playability	68%
Addictive qualities	73%

OVERALL 73%

DRAGON NINJA

● *The President is missing!*

Producer **Imagine**
Karate lessons **£8.95 cass**
£14.95 disk
Author **Paul Owens**

Ocean have clearly picked their moment to release this coin-op conversion. A year or so back the scenario was hardly that worrying, the US President is kidnapped by a gang of Ninjitsu and you have to rescue him. *Rescue* Reagan? But now it's all changed with Dan ('nuclear war is nice') Quayle set to replace Prez Bush . . .

As in the Data East original there are eight levels (one load on 128K, eight really fast multiloads on 48K machines). Probably the most notable thing about *Dragon Ninja* is the relative smallness of the main character graphics, half the size of those in *Double Dragon* or *Target; Renegade*. This allows there to be two levels, one upper and one lower floor, through most of the game. Moreover the small ninja figures and such like are attractively drawn, with good detailing and animation, while all the standard beat-'em-up moves are preserved.

Background graphics are no less professional, albeit monochromatic. You start off on a city street, move onto the top of huge speeding juggernauts, descend into the sewers, ascend to the park, drop down to some caves, hop on top of a train which takes you to a factory where the President is, then escape from the roof. Populating these levels are hordes of black clad Ninja, beautiful ladies to knock you dead, large ferocious dogs and heavily-armoured end-of-level baddies.

While battling though these levels you have to watch your power meter, which can be boosted by picking up power pods. You can also collect knives and chains, dropped by defeated enemies, but shuriken stars can only be dodged. There's no time to linger examining your weapons though, there's a time limit for each level. Occasionally, capsules appear which can reset the timer, or give you a super-punch, but the time limit is pretty easy anyway.

Given the obvious professionalism with which one of my favourite beat-'em-ups has been converted it's a great disappointment that not only has the two-player option been lost, but so has much of the game's difficulty – I got up to Level Seven on my second go. The problem is that if you crouch down and punch you defeat practically any of the enemies, which is completely unlike the coin-op. Younger players not yet hardened to beat-'em-up gameplay could find this fun, but for the rest of us this is something of a tragedy.

MARK 50%



▲ Under ninja attack in the sewers

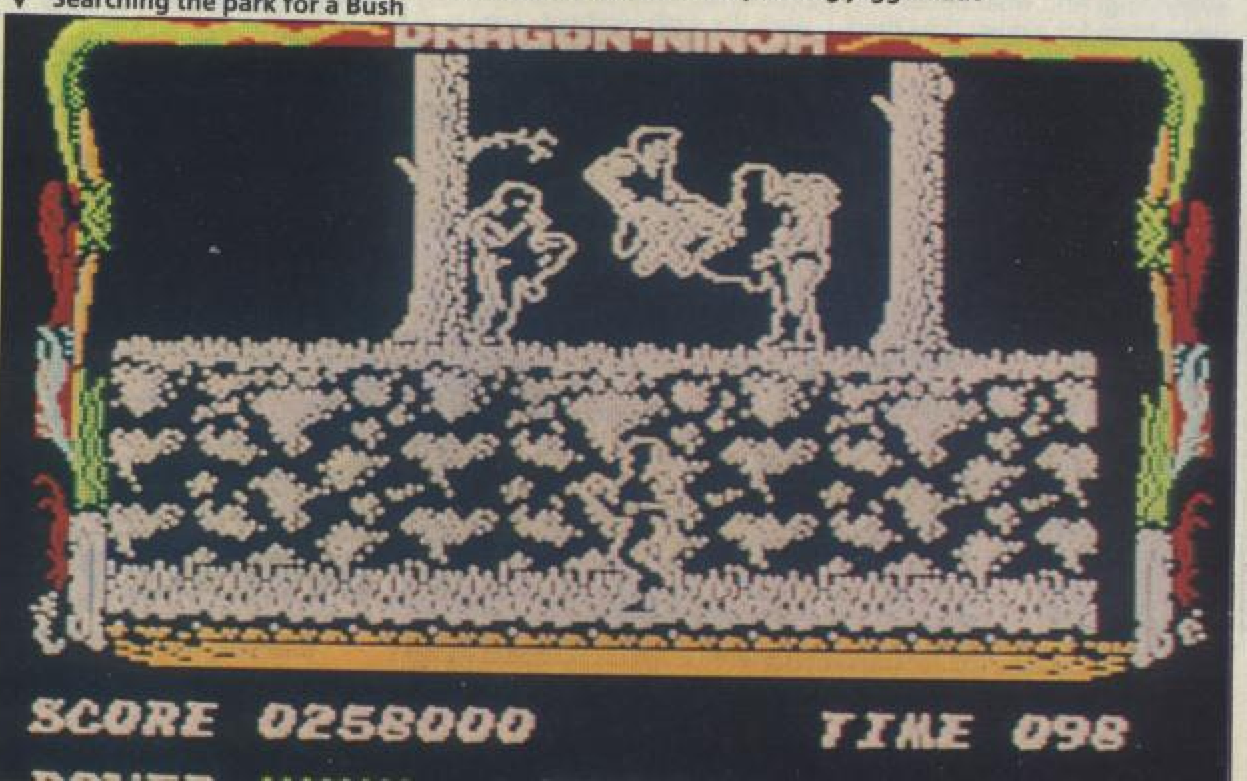


▲ High jinks on top of a speeding juggernaut

PHIL Oh no, not another oriental beat-'em-up – why oh why do they keep producing them? But even I don't mind if they've got some originality. Unfortunately, *Dragon Ninja* doesn't – even the coin-op from which it is derived relies more on amazing graphics and sound instead of gameplay. All it consists of is the endless kicking and punching of swarming ninja. Worse still, like many other beat-'em-ups, the crouch punch/kick is far too powerful – the enemies can rarely hit you when in this position. So advancing through the levels is a piece of cake. Even the larger end-of-level baddies don't present much of a challenge. Technically, the monochromatic graphics are not overly impressive, although the oriental 128K title tune and bashing sound effects are okay. But the simple lack of difficulty means you're better off saving your cash for *Renegade III*.

42%

▼ Searching the park for a Bush



THE ESSENTIALS

Joysticks: Cursor, Kempston, Sinclair
Graphics: smallish sprites on monochromatic background
Sound: good oriental 128K title tune, standard ingame bashing effects
Options: definable keys
General rating: no originality, or difficulty here, just another repetitive beat-'em-up

Presentation	60%
Graphics	50%
Sound	69%
Playability	47%
Addictive qualities	42%

OVERALL 46%

XENON



▲ Be patient, keep moving and you'll soon be onto the next level

● ***Get fresh with aliens . . .***

Producer **Melbourne House**
Trendy blasting **£7.95 cass**
Author **Jason Cowling (Lothlorien), music adapted by Tiny Williams from a ditty by David Whittaker**

Life is so strange at times. There I was watching Saturday morning TV – *Get Stale* or something, and suddenly this megagame called *Xenon* came on. Strange name for a game, I thought, sounds like a trendy disco (ie not Nick's).

So what's strange, you ask. Well, one moment I was sitting on the sofa, scoffing beans on toast. Then, before you could say 'Gaz Top needs a haircut' (or 'Wet Wet Wet video' – Ed), I was at the controls of a jet fighter. The in-built radio crackled into life. 'You've been given a dangerous mission' said a familiar voice – it was Mike Smith!

'Okay Smiffy, what've I got to do, find out what a Production Manager does?' I anxiously enquired.

'No, not quite that bad,' replied Smiffy. 'You'll have to fly through four vertically-scrolling, alien-infested levels.'

Sounds familiar, I thought.

'There are many different types of enemy,' continued Smiffy, 'some in the air and some on the ground. To shoot ground-based aliens you can transform your fighter into a hover-ship. But whatever form you're in, getting hit by enemies or their bullets reduces your fuel – run out and you're dead. Then there are the *really* large aliens – two in each level – which must be shot dozens of times to be destroyed.'

'But if this mission is so tough, why have I only got a poxy little gun?'

'Luckily for you, when some aliens are shot, they leave behind extra weapons and fuel capsules. Easy peasy. See you for a drink later, and just one little tip – don't try landing near any trees.'

So, after saying a quick prayer to the PM (Production Manager), I zoomed over the smooth-scrolling landscape. Well-drawn alien ships darted around the screen, and it took a lot of skill to reach the really large motherships. Unfortunately, these took a long time to destroy, and interrupted the otherwise enjoyable action. But most amazing was the 128K sound – much better than Radio 1. What a great, challenging shoot-'em-up.

PHIL 85%

MIKE ***Xenon*** **is a jolly good blast. If I was going to be an over-critical pain (some would say that's nothing new) then I could say lots of nasty things about unoriginality. Probably the single most impressive feature is the excellent 128K sound – there's a really thumping tune which isn't interrupted at all by gunfire FX. Graphics are almost as impressive, monochromatic, but really well-detailed and scrolling incredibly smoothly even with lots of onscreen action and the aforementioned mass of musical magnificence (phew!). All in all, a worthy buy; a tape containing several trillion years of alien killing fun.**

88%

FLY HIGH . . .

- Only use the hover-ship to destroy groups of ladybirds for extra fuel.
- The laser is the most useful weapon, as it can kill several enemies with one blast.
- The large aliens all move in an identical pattern: down-left, up-right, down-right, up-left, down, up.

There is no doubt that *Xenon* is a quality product, the graphics are very good and the 128K tune is amazingly close to the ST's. Gameplay isn't bad either, although the switching between aircraft and hover-ship doesn't add that much to the shoot-'em-up genre. So why isn't it a Smash? The main problem is the game's toughness, Level Three in particular is absolutely maddening, and killing the big aliens takes ages. All the levels look great, though, and once multiloaded in you can play a level as often as you want without going back to Level One. If you fancy a really hard challenge this is probably what you need.

MARK 80%



▲ 'Several trillion years of alien-killing fun'

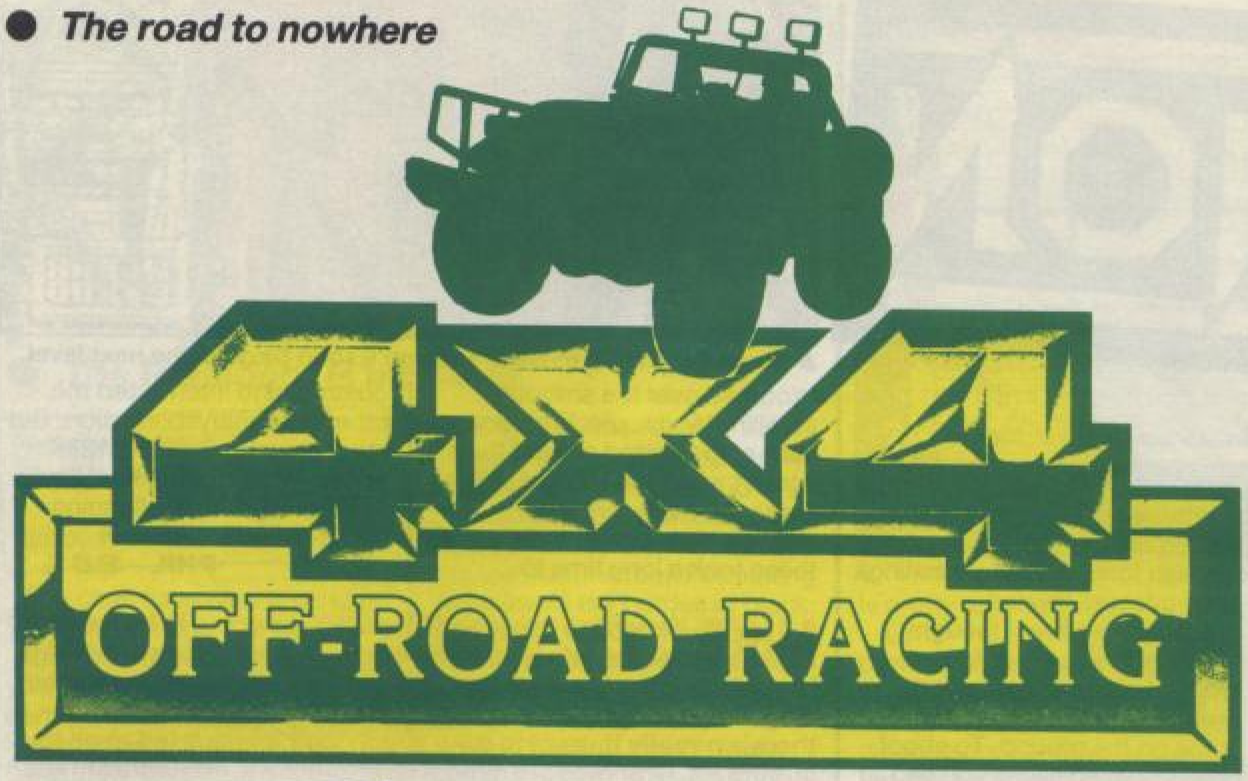
THE ESSENTIALS

Joysticks: Cursor, Kempston, Sinclair
Graphics: smooth-scrolling shaded landscape
Sound: superb ingame 128K tune and some good blasting effects
Options: definable keys
General rating: a very good conversion of the popular Arcadia coin-op

Presentation	78%
Graphics	83%
Sound	92%
Playability	84%
Addictive qualities	86%

OVERALL 84%

● *The road to nowhere*



Producer **Epyx**
Set of wheels **£8.99 cass**
£14.99 disk
Author **Steve Marsden and Dave Cooke**

4*x4* starts off fine, but doesn't develop. You must choose one of the four courses and one of the four available jeeps (the 4x4 bit?). With your jeep awaiting, you must load up with various appliances (winches, extra fuel tanks etc). Prudent use of cash should help preserve your three lives.

Once fully packed, flip the tape over to load in the chosen course. All are uniformly bland and poorly drawn, with colour their only distinguishing feature. Your jeep is shown just beyond your instrument panel. Besides a speedometer and rev counter there's a damage indicator, gear shift and all-important timer. However, finishing ahead of the rest is as important as a good time.

Just staying on the track is not enough, you must also dodge obstacles *Buggy Boy*-style. In places you have to slow down to a snail's pace to get past, but do this too often and you'll finish last. Maintaining a respectable speed all too often means damage and a quick stop for repairs. If you have the correct items a swift tinker under the bonnet soon sorts out the problem, if not then it's out with the sledgehammer for some very unreliable repairs.

The course seems to go on for ever. Dodging the same graphics over and over again soon becomes tedious, while the drone of the engine becomes irritating. *Buggy Boy* may have disappointed some people, but it's a million times more playable than this!

MARK 40%



THE ESSENTIALS

Joysticks: Cursor, Kempston, Sinclair
Graphics: effective undulating road, but little variety
Sound: limited mainly to simple engine noises
Options: choice of four vehicles and courses
General rating: an interesting idea poorly executed



▼ The road that never seems to end

PHIL **As with *Final Assault*, Epyx's *4x4 Off-Road Racing* promises an interesting mix of arcade and strategy genres and ultimately fails to deliver in either field. The idea of equipping your jeep is a good one, but can hardly make up for the disappointment of the actual race. One big irritation is that damage has to become major before it can be repaired. So a flat tyre continues to slow you down to a snail's pace until it eventually bursts and can be replaced! Also, I can't say I noticed much difference in the performance of the four jeeps and they all have an identical top speed. *4x4 Off-Road Racing* is a very disappointing Epyx simulation.**

44%

Presentation	56%
Graphics	53%
Sound	40%
Playability	44%
Addictive qualities	42%
OVERALL	**42%**

Producer **Firebird**
Bird feed **£7.99 cass**
Author **Probe**

A dwarf and a duck venture into a strange building called the Night House. 'There'll be tons o' treasure in 'ere' says Shorty. 'And it says in the blurb that if we find ten special keys, we can get to the Calculations Room, whatever that is.'

'Quack!' agrees Ducky. So off they set through cobwebbed rooms, Ducky flying directly above Shorty's head: 'I hope you don't get too scared by the spooky things round here,' warns Shorty, 'or I'll need to wash my hair when I gets 'ome'.

On entering a doorway, the duo drop appear in a ominous-looking expanse. Here, in a murky corridor live some of the weirdest flying creatures Ducky has ever seen. 'They don't look like my mates,' he informs Shorty. 'Ouch! One just hit me – gerra move on will ya, Shorty!'

But Shorty is about as fast as a tortoise on crutches. 'I tell you what,' says Ducky, 'I'll fly on ahead to look for the treasure chests and you can follow me when I find one.'

'But 'ow will I know where you

Producer **Anco**
Your stake **£9.95 cass**
Author **John Mitchell**

Shock, horror! Page Three Maria Whittaker is really an alien shapechanger! The appalling truth is revealed not by the *Sunday Sport*, but by Kent-based software house Anco. In a series of hand-drawn pictures from their latest strip-poker release they show Maria's face covered in ugly red splotches while her body becomes increasingly bizarre – one screen shows her arm is contoured *exactly* like the coastline of Norway!

Well, this has got to be the most offensive software we've seen in ages. Not only does it offend feminists, but gratuitously insults Maria Whittaker fans, poker enthusiasts, unemployed graphic artists, anyone without a white stick and no doubt Maria Whittaker herself. Something of an achievement we think.

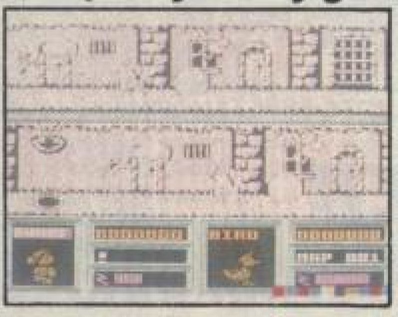
To be honest the poker isn't too bad, although once you've completed the game, after an hour or so, the £9.95 might seem rather black comedy. In fact there is an option to play another





▲ Ducky and Shorty get their act together to read the map on the lower screen

● *A pretty ducky game?*



are?' enquires Shorty.

'Simple,' replies Ducky. 'You see, this split-screen technique allows us both to be shown at the same time. And if we're together, we can even see a map'.

'Ingenious!' enthuses Shorty.

MIKE Oh dear. There isn't really anything in the least bit endearing about *Dynamic Duo*. It's boring, unattractive and initially confusing, due to both poor instructions and a very badly laid out screen display. What's more, when you do work out the irksome controls the actual game is disappointingly shallow – just run around, shoot things and grab treasure. Two-player games are usually popular in the Towers, but this wasn't. It's probably best playing it in one-player mode, flipping between the characters, so you can't blame anyone else for your mistakes.

30%

THE ESSENTIALS

Joysticks: Cursor, Kempston, Sinclair
Graphics: sloppy, flabby sprites search dreary corridors
Sound: fetch me my hearing-aid
Options: one or two players? Probably best with none
General rating: the most unentertaining double act since Little and Large

'Pity it's such a crappy, boring game really. Flipping daft graphics an' all – does my bottom really wobble like that?'

'I'm afraid so – ever since you went on the Nick Roberts high-fat diet!' quacks Ducky.

PHIL 28%

Presentation	24%
Graphics	35%
Sound	17%
Playability	31%
Addictive qualities	27%

OVERALL 29%



● *Drop your hands, or your trousers!!*

'girl' which, when selected, painstakingly loads in another 23 blocks and guess what? The pictures are exactly the same as those you've already seen! Anco offends buyers yet again!

The quality of the programming is perhaps best judged by the incredibly slow and jerky scrolling of ironic messages across the bottom of the screen. Readers tempted by this dubious release, can thus be assured neither game nor graphics are worth £1.99, let alone £9.95, even the poster is poor being an exact duplicate of the tacky, but perfectly demure, cover.

STUART 24%

THE ESSENTIALS

Joysticks: Cursor
Graphics: badly-drawn pictures of Maria (we think) in various states of undress
Sound: a pathetic card shuffling noise that sounds like a severe case of flatulence – perhaps Maria had beanz for dinner
General rating: appalling piece of exploitation – not of Miss Whittaker, but of anybody gullible enough to buy such trash

▼ Maria Whittaker (or so we're told) being coy



PHIL After playing this all the way through, and several times being reduced to just my socks, I've come to the conclusion this is a really thrilling release for all you fans of abstract art. Only about two of the pictures look convincingly human, and of them only one bares any resemblence to Miss Whittaker. It wouldn't be so bad if the computer played a decent game of poker, but it's far too easy to beat. Further tackiness is added by Maria's corny comments when you win a hand, such as 'Your mother wouldn't like what you're doing to me'! Such a tacky licence is clearly aimed at those seeking titillation. But even if you like to keep abreast of both Miss Whittaker's assets, *Maria's Christmas Box* turns out to be just one huge boob (you're fired! – Ed).

21%

Presentation	32%
Graphics	22%
Sound	08%
Playability	25%
Addictive qualities	21%

OVERALL 23%

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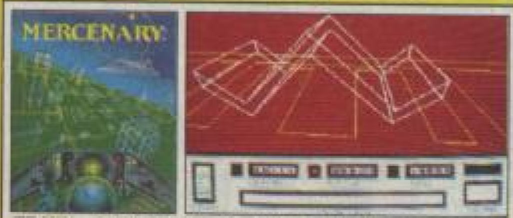
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WATCH THE REALTIME!
BUT DON'T GET TOO CARRIED AWAY!!

CARRIER COMMAND

CRASH COMPETITION

CARRIER COMMAND

is the game that **Telecomsoft/Rainbird** have been promising for quite a while (it's 99.9% finished the lads at CRASH keep being told). But it now seems that it will see the light of day very soon (hah, where have we heard that one before?), so to celebrate Rainbird have asked me to run this comp. The Realtime-programmed game concerns two heavily



armed aircraft carriers duking it out over 32 islands – see page 95. I had a great uncle who went to sea you know, he became the captain of a cruise liner, only trouble was that it hit an iceberg and sank.

The only time that I have been to sea was when I won the competition holiday, the only trouble was that I don't travel too well by water and consequently felt rather sea sick. Of course, I gained no sympathy from the CRASH mob, they only moaned about me having a holiday whilst they slave away over their word processors. But enough of the wittering about my hols, where was I . . . oh yes, the *Carrier Command* competition. Rainbird, are offering some great prizes (and I mean that most sincerely folks). The first four names out of the hat will earn their owners a Telecomsoft goodie bag, in it they will find a Telecomsoft watch, a Telecomsoft T-shirt, and a copy of *Carrier Command*. Although fifteen runners-up won't feel left out because a copy of *Carrier Command* will soon be winging its way to them (128K only at the moment!). How to win? Get out your pencils and colouring pens and use your imagination to draw a *Carrier Command*-style futuristic battleship, add your name and address and send your masterpiece to **AHOY THERE MATEYS!, CRASH, PO Box 10, LUDLOW, Shropshire SY8 1DB**. Entries in by April 2, please.



INCREDIBLE SHRINKING



MIKE Gameplay is original, challenging and most importantly, enjoyable! The only major problem is the fact that after every life the sphere goes back to the top of the first plate, which is absolutely maddening when you were at the bottom of the fourth! The title tune isn't exactly the sort of thing you put on tape and listen to on the Walkman (well, not unless you've got inexplicably bad musical taste!), but the ingame effects are quite adequate. Well designed, and more or less perfectly implemented, *ISS* is a pleasure to play. At ten quid it's a fair investment, but well worth it!

91%

Producer **Electric Dreams**
Small change **£9.99 cass**
Author **Four's Field**

● *Ball goes on CRASH diet*

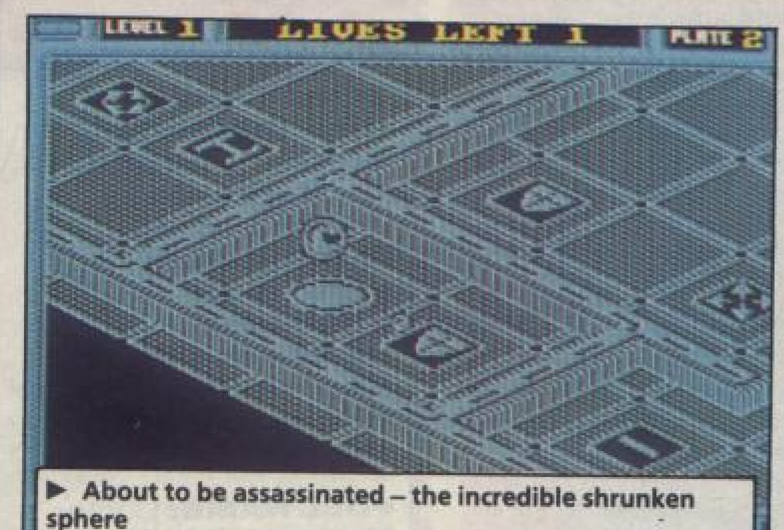
You live on the planet Sangfalmadore and, being an ambitious soft of chap, have entered the Sphere Training Corps. The most fearsome part of the STC is the Sangfalmadore Run, made even more deadly by a recent earthquake trapping Colonel Matt Ridley. You've volunteered to rescue him, but only complete mastery of your fighter sphere will see you through.

The Run is made up of eight levels, each subdivided into four interconnected isometric mazes. There's much more to the game though, than simply having a good enough sense of direction to find the exits and lifts. The sphere is incredible not only because it can shrink, but also because it can expand and change its weight by touching special tiles. Being small allows you to go through narrow passageways, being light means you don't fall through cracked tiles, but at other times you need to be big and heavy to push objects around.

There are also hostile tiles which can trap you, domes which can send you zooming off at high speed, and assassin generators. Assassins are hostile drones which take a life on contact – unless you have a shield (gained by touching the relevant tile) or shoot them first. You only have a limited amount of ammunition, but you can get a refill by bumping into an ammo dump – four of these are placed by the player before the start of the game. The Run's toughest problem however, is the rapid decay of all the blank tiles. Contact with a decayed tile is deadly, so there's a time limit.

Clearly *ISS* is a fairly complex game, made even more so by the ball's inertia leading to control problems. Persistence has its own reward though, and a game of immense playability is soon revealed. Both skill and strategy are needed to get through the levels and this combination gives the game long-lasting appeal – it really grows on you the more you play it.

PHIL 90%



► About to be assassinated – the incredible shrunken sphere

ROLL OVER?

- Try to stay as small and light as possible (did I mention Nick?!).
- Collect a new shield whenever you see one. If your shield runs out, be very careful not to bump into assassins.
- When you place your ammunition dumps, make a sketch of the maze so you'll know where you're going.
- Roll over the plus signs for extra points – you get an extra life after 50000 points.
- Whatever you do, don't be a square!

If you thought that the control on *Virus* was tough wait until you play *Incredible Shrinking Sphere*. Slow and deliberate movements are a must because thundering blindly about often causes the normally erratic ball to become wildly anarchic. Practice makes perfect though, and after that great fun can be had trying to complete the current level whilst keeping out of the reach of the assassins. Like Mike, I found the prompt return to Level One after a death absolutely infuriating, but that said, this a very challenging and innovative game which will keep you playing for ages.

MARK 90%

THE ESSENTIALS

Joysticks: Kempston, Sinclair
Graphics: attractive scrolling, isometric mazes
Sound: only a few spot effects, even on the 128K
Options: place ammunition dumps
General rating: a puzzling, enjoyable maze game with lots of lasting appeal

Presentation	86%
Graphics	85%
Sound	52%
Playability	89%
Addictive qualities	91%

OVERALL 90%

SANXION HITS

What the jiggins is all this *Sanxion* milarky anyway?!!?

"Blowed if we know", pipes six squillion *Sanxion Hits* readers, "but wethinks about time the so-called "truth" was discovered! Hurrah!!!

Hellllooo there viewers, "nestling" in the heart of Britain's so-called beautiful Berkshire is a small "hamlet", but it's home to the brightest software house around . . . **Thalamus**!!!!

Everyone knows that Thalamus has been rampaging "up" the Commodore 64 games charts since, oooo, 1903 which is quite an astounding feat really, isn't it? And way back in 1903 a spriteful young Finnish chappie, who claimed to be Stavros Fasoulas, came up with a game called Sanxion, and what a game it was. "Best shoot 'em up ever" hollarded lots of people and immediately "popped" out to their local software stockist and bought zillions of copies taking it to the number one "slot" in the charts and there it stayed for 83 years!!!

And swipe me, if the Thalamus team haven't come up with a "spiffiing" brainwave. To put Sanxion on the Spectrum!!! Not just the same though, no, by jimmeny! It's now **Sanxion: the Spectrum remix**. Brill eh?

Sanxion: the Spectrum Remix is a stunning horizontally scrolling shoot 'em up extravaganza with the alien battles viewed from the side and from overhead!! Cooo-er!!! Is there no end to this games brilliance? Nope!!!

Level after level of crazed aliens sweep down onto future Earth's surface spitting laser death, like aliens do when they get a bit vexed. Sanxion is one of them technical things called "multiloads" which means it's going to be fab!

And with music too!!! Originally composed by the hip popster Serge Prokofiev (v. ancient pop type who stunned the world with his best selling single *the Romeo and Juliet suite*).

In "fact", **Sanxion: the Spectrum remix** has created such a hullaballoo in the Spectrum software scene that it's bound to be an absolute riot!!!!

So there you have it listeners. **Sanxion: the Spectrum remix** on cassette at a measly £7.99 and on +3 diskette at £12.99. And that's your "lot"!! Byeeeeeee!



Cripes!!! Who are these two young "trendies?" And how swanky they look in their Thalamus T-shirt get up!!!! Now you can have the same "cred"!!!! Just send a cheque or postal order for £5.50 made payable to Thalamus Ltd to: Thalamus "T"shirt Offer, Thalamus, 1 Saturn House, Calleva Park, Aldermaston, Berkshire RG7 4QW. **And waddayouknow a fab 100% combed "cotton" T-shirt (XXL) will be with you before you can say "Bob's your uncle!". That is as long as you take 28 days to say it (Haw haw!).**

★★★ PERSONAL FILE ★★★

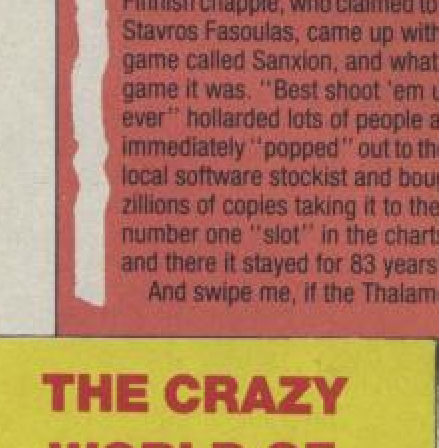
Dr Manfred V Flypaper

What a crazy man Thalamus' Space "expert" Dr Manfred really is. He's the one who studies all Thalamus" games and finds the "real" stories behind them!!

FULL NAME: Doctor Manfred V Flypaper. Vot does ze "V" stand for? Nothzink veally, it's just zat vhen ze vicar asked my fazer vot mine name was to be at ze Christening he zaid "Dr Manfred" zen he flicked two of his fingers at Aunt Gertrude and zen said "Flypaper"!! It just zort of stuck!!!

WHAT DO YOU KNOW ABOUT OPERATION SANXION? Very good quevstion mine host. Ah vell, Operation Sanxion happens in ze future vhen a load of old aliens get razther upzet that things on Earth are all "tickity boo" so decide to shoot ze living daylights out of everbody!! **Sanxion: the Spectrum remix** is just a simulation of future events!!! Be prepared kids!

HAVE YOU GOT ANY GOOD TIPS FOR IMMORTAL LIFE? Vell, buying **Sanxion: the Spectrum remix** is good start! Just £7.99 on tape and £12.99 on ze ±3 disk!!!





Golly! Aren't **Thalamus** 'jubilant" about *Sanxion*'s release?!?!

Yes they are!!! *"Yeahhhhhh, weweeeeeooooo, hurrah! Yippeeeee! it's the best thing since, oooooooooo, the last game we launched!"* cries out **Paul** "parsnip" **Cooper**, Thalamus' big boss. And what about you Mr **David** "smarty-boots" **Birch**? *"Brilliant!!! Super!!! Smashing!! Love you all!! Now kids, remember – send your orders for* **Sanxion: the Spectrum remix** to: Thalamus, 1 Sarturn House, Calleva Park, Aldermaston, Berkshire RG7 4QW and the world will be a better place!!!" (Snip! This is all getting far too silly! (th-wack!) Wha . . . Badoing! It's a "radish"!!!) **Byeeeee!!**

PHIL KING'S ADVENTURE TRAIL

Aargh, my stomach's still aching from that disgusting Samara pie I ate last month. Ha, serves me right, you're thinking. After all, what does a footy-mad sheep farmer know about adventure games anyway? Well, a bit more than my eccentric Egyptian predecessor – how can any sane person voluntarily eat sheep's eyes?!

So leaving my football and flock behind, I shall venture into dark worlds where even my sheep fear to graze. This month I've stepped into the shoes of such diverse characters as an accident-prone gnome and a monk who witnesses some X-rated goings-on in the Dark Ages. Until next month, carry on reaching for your goals, but always keep your sheep on the ground.



INGRID'S BACK

Level 9, £14.95 cass, £19.95 disk

Contrary to popular belief (the whole of my sheep flock), this is not the sequel to *Ingrid's Front*, but instead to the very humorous *Gnome Ranger* (for some strange reason never reviewed in CRASH). If you've played that game you'll know its star, Ingrid Bottomlow, is one of those brainy people always trying to fix what ain't broke. In the first game her folks gave her a one-way teleport scroll in the futile hope of losing her.

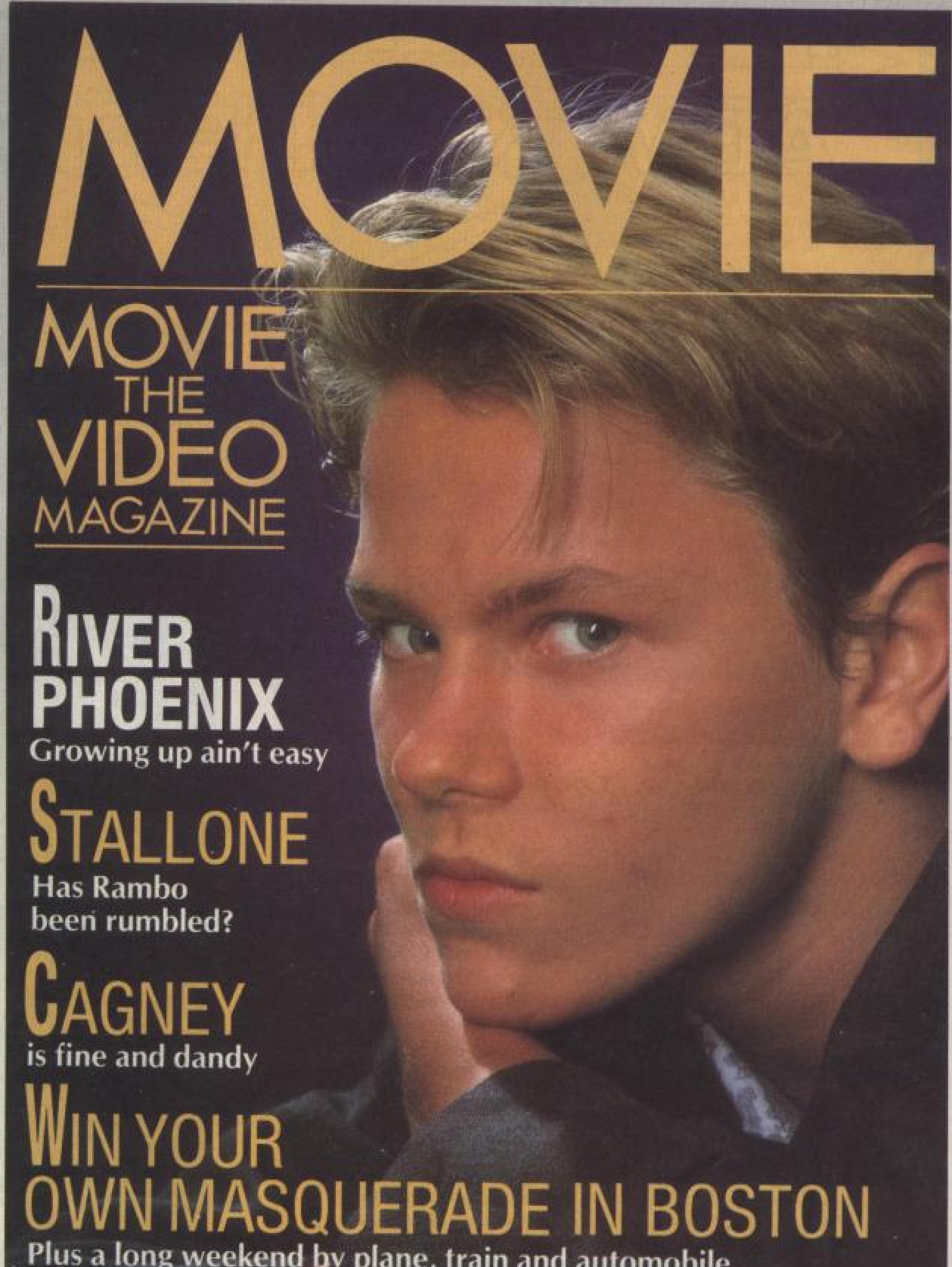
Upon her return the accident-prone gnome is soon driving her family to distraction again – not to mention attempted murder. Unfortunately for Jasper Quickbuck she survives to become the biggest, not to say the ugliest, opponent to his plans to steamroller her village so as to make room for some yuppie homes! (A hanging offence if there ever was one!)

The adventure is split into three separately-loaded sections. In the first section Ingrid, with the help of her dog Flopsy, must get the villagers to sign a petition to block Quickbuck's planned eviction order. Finding people is no problem as the special FIND command can be used: Ingrid then takes the shortest route to the relevant character. This is just as well, as the characters independently move around the countryside. But getting some of them to sign the petition is a little more difficult. Ingrid's windmill-owning Uncle Dusty, for instance, is suspicious of her since she demolished his last mill! Then there are Quickbuck's minions, who, if offered the petition, will sign silly names like Mickey Mouse. Nevertheless experienced adventurers shouldn't take too long to finish the petition.

Section two is called The Steamroller – so much for the power of petitions. The Bottomlows are just enjoying breakfast when a strange sound suddenly erupts from nearby. It is the chugging and spluttering of a steamroller being driven towards the Bottomlows' farm by Silas Crawley, one of Quickbuck's unscrupulous employees.

Now if it was my house that was about to be flattened, I'd just set my pet Tory MP on them. Ingrid's more into passive resistance, though; ie, lying down in front of the steamroller. This delays the destruction of the farm – not because Silas is worried about hurting anyone, but because the steamroller might get damaged by running over such a

When the lights go up the show goes on.



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substantial gnome! However, this is only a temporary solution; the permanent one requires a lot more thought and puzzle-solving. Part three is equally difficult and involves infiltrating Quickbuck's manor disguised as a maid.

Just as in *Gnome Ranger*, every situation in the sequel is laced with a characteristic type of humour which, depending on taste, will either have you splitting your sides or scratching your head in bewilderment. To be honest I didn't much like the continual use of 'gn' instead of 'n', particularly as you have to spell inputs that way as well. It's not too much to put up with though, and there are some brilliantly-funny scenes, such as where a travelling salesgnome is making a feeble attempt at playing darts. Some of the solutions also require lateral, whimsical thinking, so the humour isn't wholly superficial.

Interaction with characters is mainly limited to ordering them around, eg GNOAH, LIE DOWN. But a good atmosphere is created by the hilarious descriptions of the various gnomes and trolls you meet. The typically-refined Level 9 parser understands virtually all sensible input and includes the useful commands GO TO a location, FOLLOW a character, and on 128K machines, UNDO and RAMSAVE.

The triple format (+3, Amstrad CPC and PCW) disk also contains about thirty black and white pictures on the B-side. As in *Lancelot*, the size of the picture may be altered by scrolling it up to increase the size of the text window below.

Littered with puns, *Ingrid's Back!* is a fine adventure as well as a funny one, and should provide welcome light relief for weary adventurers. Indeed, Level 9 are so sure of her continued popularity that another Ingrid game is planned for release in May, titled *Gnome Free!*

Overall 81%

THE HERMITAGE

Pegasus Developments, £3.99 (48K cass), £5.99 (128K cass), £9.95 (128K disk)

For those of you who think that a hermit is a gangly green frog in love with Miss Piggy, you're obviously very stupid! A hermit is actually someone who decides to live in solitude. And his abode is thus not a Muppet Theatre but something called a hermitage.

In this homegrown, *PAWed* adventure, you are a monk named Ambrose, living in the Dark Ages. He's been putting his feet up in the local monastery for the last twenty years or so. A cushy life you might think, but just recently – and rather belatedly – the Archbishop has decided he should actually do some work. A pilgrimage has been suggested, and not to some dead glam place like Rome or Lourdes. Instead, Ambrose is to toddle up to the local mountains and murder this old hermit. Not very Christian you might think, but in fact during the Dark Ages the Church was really into that sort of thing, what with burning people at the stake, boiling them in oil and drowning old women in rivers, it was virtually the peak of religious activity in Europe. And a sad consequence of all this was that the dead peoples' property had no-one to look after it, forcing the Church to take it over . . .

According to the Archbishop, the hermit must be killed because he's an incarnation of our old friend Beelzebub. In all probability he probably just holds a few wild parties now and again, to break the tedium. But still, Ambrose is far from keen on this pilgrimage idea. Anyway, he sets off with no possessions and apparently wearing nothing – obviously a bad habit to get into (groan – Ed). This is where the game begins and it's a good idea to swiftly return to the monastry for some objects to help you on your quest. Unfortunately, during your brief absence the monastry has been ransacked and the Archbishop killed. Even more



spine-chilling, all the dead bodies have been drained of blood.

After gathering a few things it's out of there as fast as possible, even if the only road takes you toward the mountains. First stop is a strange village where the villagers are tying young women to hay stacks and setting them alight, while copulation is going on in the street (not another Acid House party scandal!). Being a saintly soul, or even if the reverse, it's a good idea to save a young woman if you want to progress in the game.



Once you've escaped from the village you soon come across a small hut which deserves investigation. Inside is another beautiful lady, sprawled across the bed and obviously in need of spiritual guidance from you. Furthermore, she wants you to kiss her (this Ambrose chappie must be the monasterial equivalent of Richard Gere), but unfortunately she has a fetish for draining the blood from her lovers!

Clearly *The Hermitage*'s authors have set out to shock and, although there's no bad language present, this is what they achieve. The shock value derives mainly from the adventure setting, however, there's only a few outrageous scenes, none of which could provide much competition for a typical Hammer horror film on TV. And just like those feeble horror movies the plot in this adventure is weak, consisting of a hotchpotch of unconnected places and ideas which don't gel together. Deprived of any kind of effective mystical atmosphere the 'shocking' scenes are simply amusing.

On the technical side the game is much better with useful VOCAB and ROOM commands. The +3 version features some excellent, and completely innocuous colour pictures, loaded in when they're needed. +3 owners also get a free, humorous adventure, *Teacher Trouble*.

Hopefully these technical talents will be put to use in a better adventure next time as *The Hermitage* wastes them. 'Shock' scenes cannot compensate for a feeble plot, and with only a few problems needing to be solved to complete it this is a disappointment.

The Hermitage is available direct from Pegasus Developments (cheques payable to Tony Collins) at **760 Tyburn Rd, Erdington, BIRMINGHAM B24 9NX**.

Overall 47% ▶

SIGNSTUMPS

NEWS

Creators of The Challenge Of Ipthus, Creative Juices, have written to inform me that they have improved the program by removing the bugs mentioned in my review (Issue 58). The new version is titled Ipthus +, and anyone with the old version can upgrade it by sending it back with the receipt and an SAE.

After a short absence, Signstumps returns with a vengeance, and will continue to be a regular feature of the Adventure Trail.

LORD OF THE RINGS

GARY PLOWMAN asks how to get past the Mines of Moria in the second part of the game.

SAY DOOR 'FRIEND' to open the gate. Then go E, U, E, E, E, D, D, W, D, S, D. Smash the stone door in your way, go E and U. Go through the door into the square room where the book is. Wait until you are attacked by orcs, then go E, E, D, W, S, D, S. Then go S, D, E about ten times to get out of Moria.

CORRUPTION

PETE LIVESEY is obviously too scrupulous to be able to think corruptly. He wants to know how to get the tape to put in the BMW's cassette player.

First, you must go to Theresa's office at 10:00am (she leaves to powder her nose at this time). Get the brass key from the drawer and open the locked door to David's office. The tape is in his desk.

MATT LUCAS

KENNETH GUISE is having trouble with Player's excellent adventure: he wants to know how to get past the porcupines on the island.

SHOUT AT PORCUPINES to wake them up and make them run away.

THE BIG SLEAZE

Piranha's superb adventure is still causing problems for CARL CHADWICK. He asks how to blow the safe open, and also where to drive to in the car.

To open the safe, INSERT DYNAMITE (found in car) INTO KEYHOLE, LIGHT FUSE, go NORTH and WAIT until you hear an explosion. There are many places to drive to: those in part one include the office, Joe's Diner, the police station, and Astoria Boulevard.

THE BARD'S TALE

DAVE HARRIS is stuck in Electronic Art's excellent adventure. He just can't get off the first floor in the castle.

On the first level, you must first find the Crystal Sword (in a secret door) and equip your warrior or paladin with it. You must find a throne and make your bard sit on it. Now you should be able to continue and reach the top level of the castle.

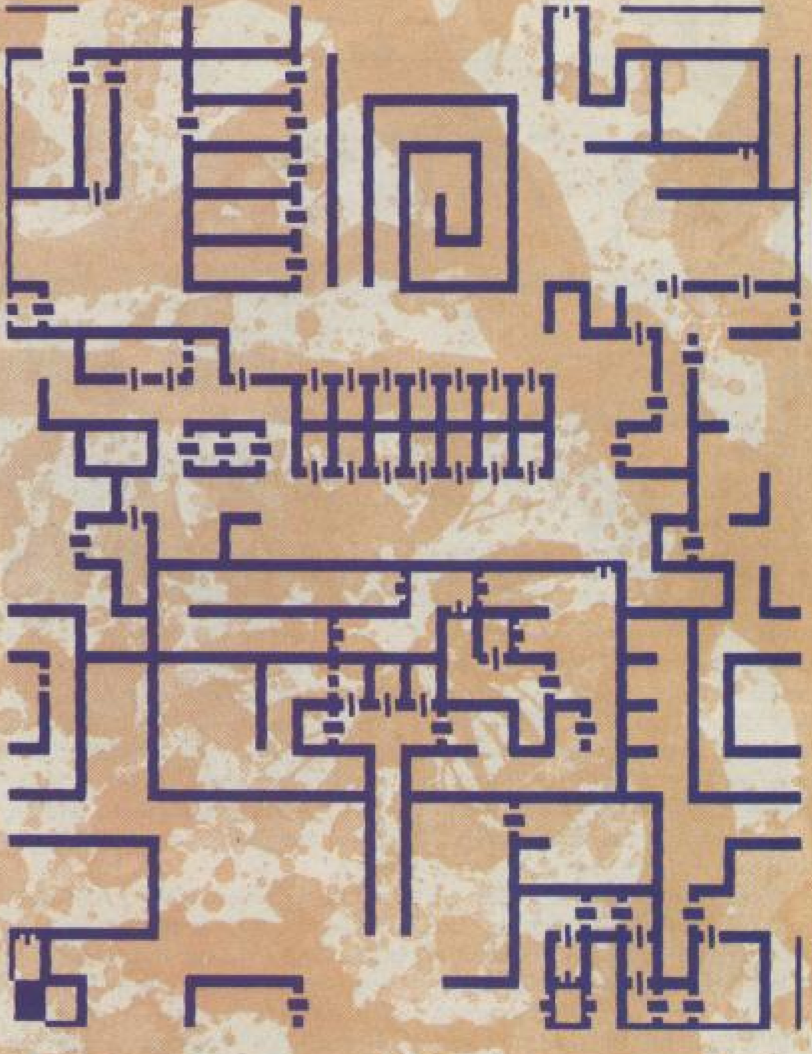
RIGEL'S REVENGE

Both DAVID CARTLIDGE and MARK DAVIES can't escape from the basement. Despite following the Issue 55 tip (examine the sink, GET MEDIKIT, WEAR MEDIKIT, climb onto the sink, press the red button, pull the bar hard, bend or push the bar hard. When Harper feels drained, press the green button), they still can't quite squeeze through the bars.

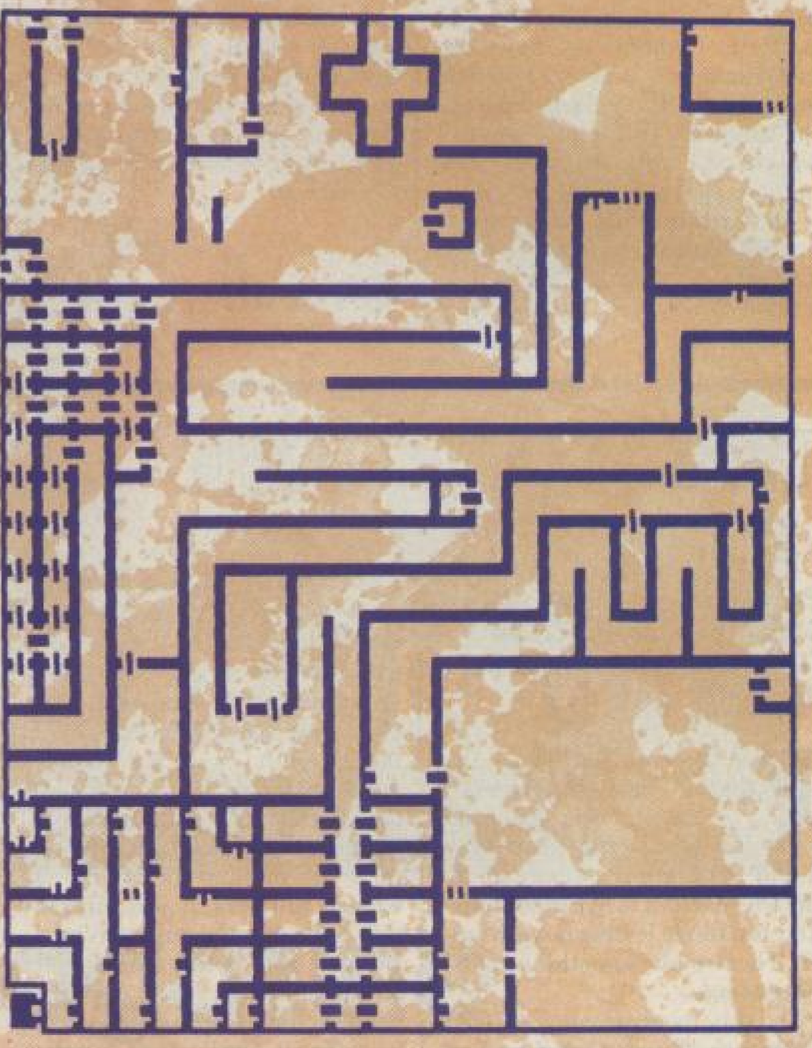
To be able to get through the bars, you must not be carrying anything other than the goggles. So put all other objects through the window, go out and get all again.

If you're tearing your hair out over any adventures – old or new – don't go bald! Instead, send me your problem and I'll do my best to help. Unfortunately, personal replies are not possible.

Don't forget, tips and maps are always most welcome and there's still a £30 prize for the best each month. Send tips and problems alike to
SIGNSTUMPS, CRASH, PO Box 10, LUDLOW, Shropshire SY8 1DB.



Harkyn's Castle, Level Two



Harkyn's Castle, Level Three

▲ **The above maps are excerpts from *Tales Of The Unknown, Vol One: The Bard's Tale Clue Book*. This comprehensive item is available from Electronic Arts (Langley Business Centre, 11-49 Station Road, Langley, Berks, SL3 8YN) for £5. Thanks to EA for permission to print the maps.**

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BBC screen shots

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ACCESS VISA

LM'S FORUM



'Years may come and years may go, but the coming of spring remaineth slow' – yes, you guessed it, grandma's definitive word on why it's usually so cold right into March and April!

Well, I don't know about you, but we've certainly had a warm few months hear at the Towers (apart from a cold snap the other day . . . and the day before . . . and the day before . . .). And my Forum postbox has been sizzling hot, too, what with the Curious Case of the CRASH Covermounts adding to the usual array of controversy, complaint and cartooning.

But first things first; this month's £30 software prize goes to a fanzine fellow who's produced a little booklet of all-time greats which I enjoyed as much as CRASH's (well, almost . . .) . . .

THE GREATS DEBATE

Dear Lloyd

Can I just add my two penn'orths to the raging debate over CRASH's all-time greats?

About May 1988 the Chic Computer Club published a fanzine/booklet entitled *The Spectrum Software Collector's Guide* – which is in similar style to your supplement, and sought to assemble the very best titles released on the Spectrum throughout the years.

We obviously faced a similar problem to you as to how to define the best games out of the vast choice available to Spectrum-owners.

One of our alternatives was the one which you seem to have selected – simply to let an acknowledged Spectrum 'expert' or two select those titles which *in their opinion* were the 'best'.

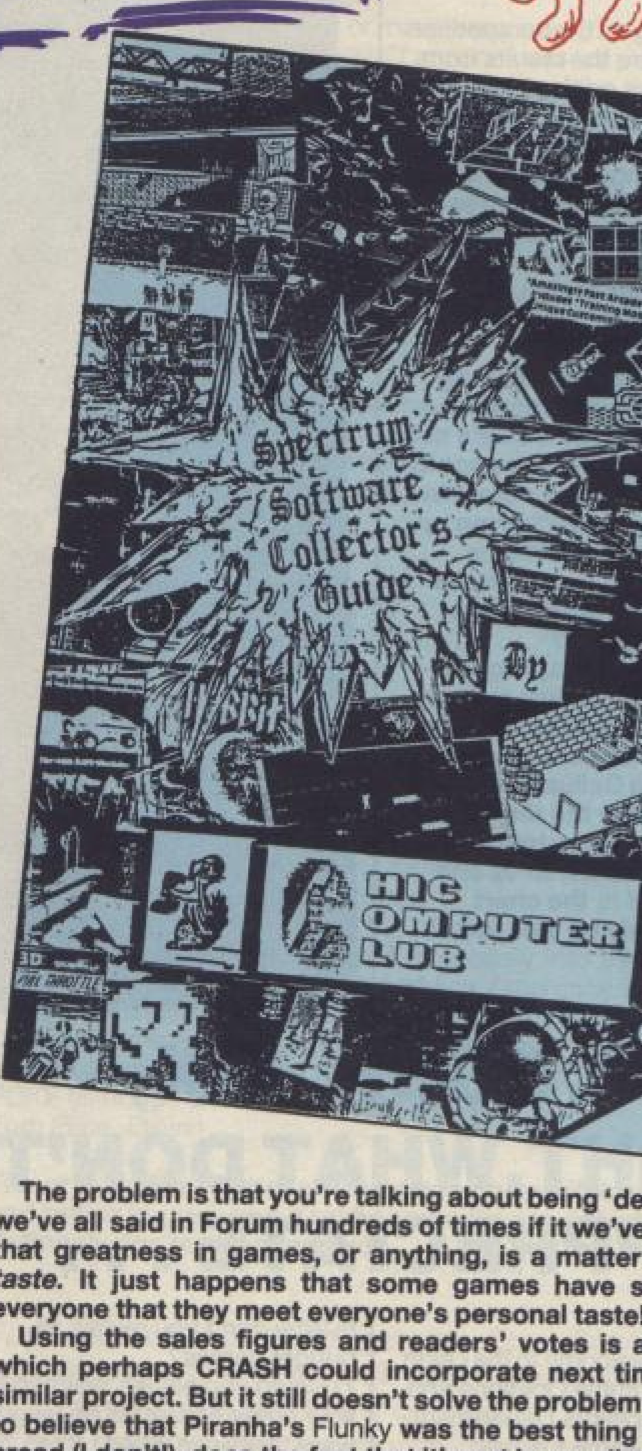
What we tried to do was to temper our opinions with some hard facts – namely the sales and popularity charts for Spectrum games throughout the years. We then combined these with review ratings and audience feedback (eg year-end awards), and came up with a set of games which is based more on hard fact than speculation.

I'm sure you could do better than us if you put your collective minds to it, but for the moment I really feel that our list of games is closer to a definitive list of all-time greats than the CRASH one. It includes *Pyjamarama*, *Shadowfire*, *Manic Miner*, and *The Hobbit*, which by our calculations came out as the longest-running Number One of them all! How could you not select it? There has *never ever ever* been a game which caused such an immense reaction among Spectrum-owners for so long!

So if any of your readers are interested in a more factual selection of all-time classics, or a trip down Memory Lane, the *Spectrum Software Collector's Guide* is available from: Chic Computer Club, *28 Criss Grove, Chalfont St Peter, Gerrards Cross, Buckinghamshire SL9 9HQ.* The normal price is £1.99 and we'll even knock 50p off for CRASH readers in a fit of generosity!

Steve Winter, Gerrards Cross, Buckinghamshire

I have one semantic quibble with your points, Steve – though as I mention above, your Spectrum Software Collector's Guide **is a pretty comprehensive list of 104 greats.**



The problem is that you're talking about being 'definitive', and we've all said in Forum hundreds of times if it we've said it once that greatness in games, or anything, is a matter of *personal taste.* It just happens that some games have so much for everyone that they meet everyone's personal taste!

Using the sales figures and readers' votes is a good idea, which perhaps CRASH could incorporate next time it does a similar project. But it still doesn't solve the problem – if I happen to believe that Piranha's Flunky **was the best thing since sliced bread (I don't!), does the fact that it's not in your list make it any less 'great' for me?**

Ah well, philosophical folk always tie themselves in knots, grandma says. So I'd urge readers to make up their own minds by getting hold of the Chic Computer Club's publication if they can – it's nicely designed and packed with pictures, though of course they're all black-and-white and the reproduction is a little gloomy. (They'll have me writing Fanzine File next!)

Also, at the end there's a quiz – one question about each of the 104 greats – in which you can earn a certificate by playing all the games.

For information about Steve's club, send an SAE to the address he gives.

LM

DIAL C FOR CRASH

Dear Lloyd

Why the telephone competition – what happens to people who don't have phones? The price of CRASH is surely enough without having to pay to enter competitions – please revert back to the comps-on- ▶



comps-on-the-page format. The phone system is fine for tips and releases but for competitions – no thanks!

Continuing on the competition line, where are the results from the Christmas edition?

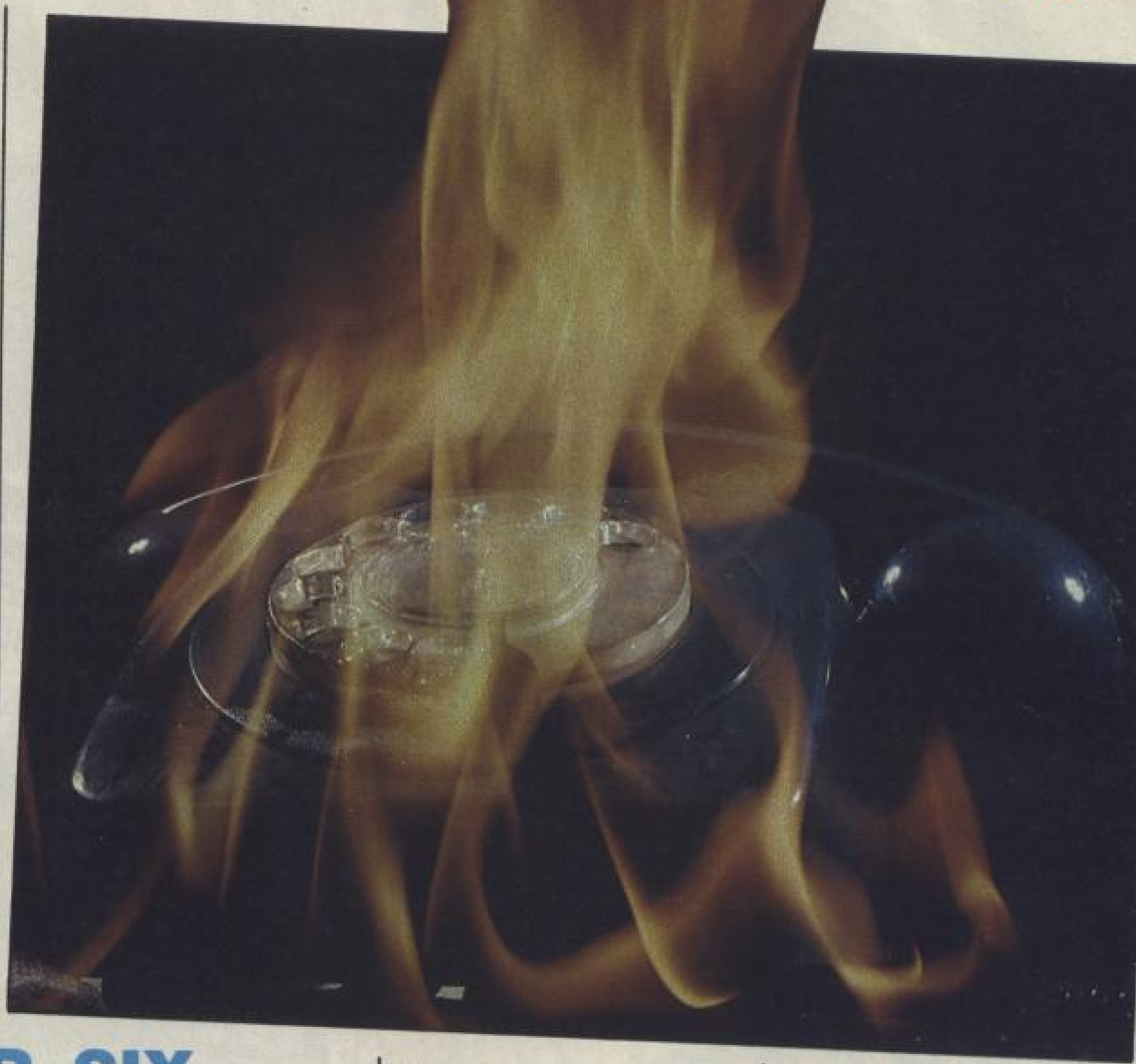
Yet another complaint comes through the new charts. If you're going to change them, why not include the Gallup charts, as they mean far more than the current ones?

Michael James Brown, Dewsbury, West Yorkshire

And I thought I was the only person in Britain without a phone . . . I agree that it's not very easy for the untelephonic to enter the Hotline comp, but we certainly haven't given up on ordinary competitions either. Look at it as a phone comp gained rather than a printed comp lost!

As for the charts, I agree (again) that CRASH's system is not as scientific as Gallup's. However, there are problems with printing Gallup charts too – most notably the time delay. By the time Gallup had compiled it and sent it to us and we'd printed it, the chart would already be well out of date.

LM



TWO, FOUR, SIX, EIGHT, WHAT DON'T I APPRECIATE . . .

Dear Lloyd
Hello! And welcome to the Leigh Loveday Humble Opinions and Trivial Complaints Department. A list of the same follows:

1) Why was the Christmas Special out on November 17 when it could have been out on December 15?
2) Why, in the Christmas Special with so many extra pages, was Jetman still only given one page (albeit in colour) and the Forum only three pages?
3) I am getting quite irritated with the misleading review index (page numbers sometimes wrong) and omissions of Hot Shot games (eg in the aforementioned Chrizzy Special, Hot Shots were above 80%, but *Rex* got 82% – no sign of it in the Hot Shot index).
4) I, (and most of my friends) agree with Nick about Red Dwarf (talk about trivial!).
5) What's the slimy thing in the page margin called (if anything)?
6) Why don't you review all budget games?
7) Could you please Sellotape your cover cassettes on lengthways, because when I try to pull the Sellotape off, it pulls the cassette tape out with it, therefore ruining my demos.
8) Is there any reason for the recent lack of software? (Only 16 reviews in Chrizzy Special! Even less previously!!)
9) I do believe that CRASH is getting smaller. Not thinner, but smaller in content (ie the reviews are getting too short, etc).
10) Aha! A chart! My favourite 128K music . . .

☆ *Bionic Commando*
★ *Thundercats*
☆ *Beyond The Ice Palace*
★ *RoboCop*
☆ *Exolon*

Right, that seems to be it. Pack up lads, we're off 'ome for tea (oh dear, this letter was serious up to there.) Oh, and please don't give me a short answer. Please?

Leigh Loveday, West Glamorgan

PS Antidisestablishmentarianism (LMLWD?)

Dear me, you sound like grandma complaining when I happen to pick up the wrong kind of Chelsea buns in town for her . . .

1) They say Christmas is getting earlier every year, but the real reason the Christmas Special came out in November is that monthly magazines appearing in December suffer quite a lot of problems.

Many newsagents were closed for several days at a stretch last year, what with Christmas Day falling on a Sunday and everybody taking weekdays off instead, which slows down sales. Also,







everyone's so busy stuffing themselves they sometimes forget to buy CRASH (difficult as it is to believe). So, we felt that if we were going to put a lot of work into a Christmas Special, we might as well get it out early so it had a good month on the shelves!
2) There are always limitations on space (which is why Ed Dom likes those one-word answers . . .) – that should answer question 9, too.
3) There is no excuse for the errors in the review index, as we well know, but sometimes last-minute changes are made to the order of the reviews after the index has been typeset, and there isn't time to correct it. As for Hot Shot problems – maybe (I don't know myself) the game was only reviewed very close to the magazine's completion.
4) What is Red Dwarf?
5) The 'slimy thing' has recently been christened Leigh.
6) We review most good budget games, but the reasoning is that most people can afford to gamble two or three pounds on a game being good, whereas they don't want to risk £10 or so on a full-price game. Also, many budget games are pretty predictable in content . . . Anyway, Ed Dom informs me that a new budget section, Budget Bureau, has just started on page . . . umm . . . 66 (I think). Why not take a look and send me you views?
7) The cassettes wouldn't be so securely held; think about it.
8) Less is more, as a famous architect once said (actually, I shouldn't let Dom hear that, or he'll be telling me all the time . . .). Seriously, I think the answer is that most software houses are more concerned about quality than quantity now.

LM

PS Triiodothyronine

EH EH EH?

Dear Lloyd
Is your granny a little stiffy?!? (Ooer, sounds kinky.)
Is the reason she won't tell you the meaning of life because she is in a lead coffin six foot under?!? If so, are you telepathic and is that how you contact her??
Jayson 'idiot' Snipe, King's Norton, Birmingham

PS Do you still wear women's underwear? And as you've probably noticed, I'm *mad*!!!

PPS Your mag is dead good.

No, no, no, I never did, I did, I know.

LM

THE PRICE IS RIGHT AFTER ALL

Dear Lloyd
In reply to Paul Clements's letter in Issue 58 of CRASH, I think that the price of games is very reasonable. Very few games are priced over £10, and most are worth it; who wouldn't pay £15 for *Driller*?

Also, has he never heard of mail order? CRASH's own is one of the best and most reliable around.

Most of my friends get £10 or more every week, I myself get £15 a week; therefore if Paul gets only £7 a month, a small price rise would seem catastrophic.

A game that costs £8, *Head Over Heels*, gave me 250 hours of enjoyment. This works out to 3.2p per hour, pretty damn cheap!

At the PC Show, I bought an Amiga A500. I am very impressed with such games as *Starglider II*, *Carrier Command*, and *Rocket Ranger*, but in the last week I played such games as *Head Over Heels* and *Rampage* on my Spectrum and didn't touch my Amiga for over five days!

Great mag. Viva CRASH.
Simon Brown, Portsmouth, Hampshire

As you imply, 'expensive' means different things to different people – and if you get eight times as much pocket money as Paul, obviously games don't seem so hard on the wallet to you. There's no argument, really, is there?

LM

GET MY DRIFT, SLOWLY?

Dear Lloyd
There have been many complaints that recent games are not original enough. So to counter this, my father's game *Continental Drift* is about to hit the market. Well, maybe . . .

The idea is that you are the captain of a large continent, Gondwanaland. You must split it accurately into the modern-day continents of Africa, India, South America, Antarctica and Australia.

This has all the makings of an exciting real-time game – you have 2,000 million years to complete it. And I'm sure that Nick will be very disappointed to know that there will be no need for an infinite-lives POKE (although extra time may be needed)!
Tom Price, Devon

The graphics are rather slow-moving, the sprites are very large and rather jagged, and it takes some time to get into the game. Definitely one for map maniacs.

LM

Well, I'm off home to get the fire alight before grandma starts finding fault with the younger generation (that's *me*, believe it or not . . .). Many of the letters lined up for this month didn't get in, so I'm holding a few over for next time . . . and also I apologise to everyone whose letters were dramatically edited! Certain editors hand out pages like they were old misers distributing tenners . . .

Anyway, keep them coming: the moans and groans, smart talk and serious talk, and even tenners if you like. Don't forget that there's a £30 software prize for the best letter chosen each month, as long as it's sent to:

LLOYD MANGRAM'S FORUM
CRASH TOWERS
PO BOX 10
LUDLOW
SHROPSHIRE SY8 1DB

And finally, remember to write 'personal attention of Mr Mangram' on the envelope, so they get through the Towers' postal system unscathed. See you here in a few weeks' time.

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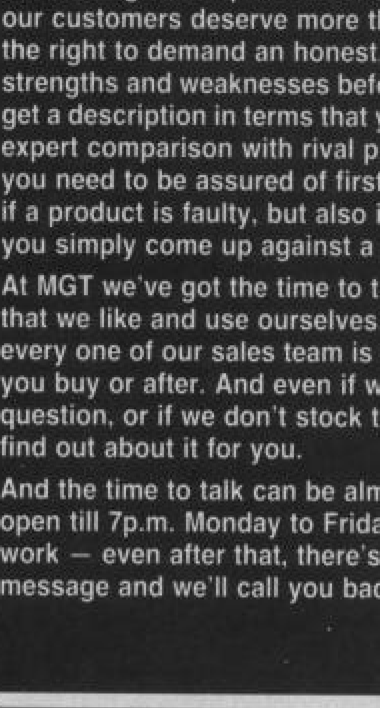
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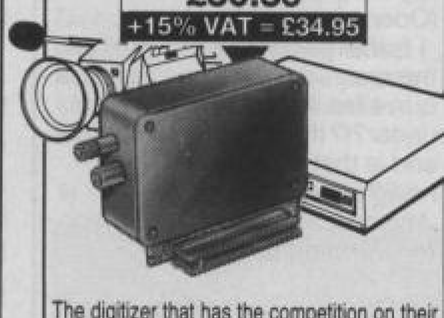
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MGT MILES GORDON TECHNOLOGY

STICK IT!

Forget *Star Wars*, this is a series destined to really run. In Issue 60 our joystick update promised sequels as soon as we received more sticks. With blisters still not healed from that feature, Mark and Phil return to the joystick frontline . . .

STAR FIGHTER

Cheetah £14.95

PHIL 'Probably the best joystick in the world' is Cheetah's bold claim for this positively huge stick. The massive moulded handle provides a comfortable grip, while the equally large base (with suckers) aids stability – great for table-top play, useless for hand-held. Four fire buttons are incorporated, along with the now-typical autofire option. An extra D-plug allows the Star Fighter to be connected to +2/+3s.

The stick has a one year guarantee, and eight microswitches make the stick fairly responsive. Unfortunately it has a very off-putting, loose feel which makes it unsuitable for games requiring precise movements.



MARK **This large stick is just the right size for my shovel-sized hands, but most people should definitely give it a try before buying. In play the thumb and forefinger fire buttons seem well placed, but feel loose. The stick itself seems slack, although, strangely the diagonals are quite easy. Playing *Daley Thompson's Olympic Challenge* was difficult, given the length of stick travel, and some terrible grating sounds were produced.**

Readers wanting an exciting-looking stick to play slow-moving flight sims/ space games could enjoy this product, but it's a questionable buy for most.

Rating: ★★½

SUPER PROFESSIONAL

Zipstik £14.99 standard, £16.99 autofire

PHIL Another ball-handled joystick, this time with trendy yellow trim. Inside a metal shaft and microswitches ensure good durability, guaranteed for 12 months.

What I like best about this stick are its grained rubber feet and handle which provide an excellent grip. What I don't like is the slightly loose feel of the fire buttons and the stick itself, although this does help hand-held use. Sadly the autofire will not work with +2 or +3 machines (again!) with a standard interface. This is an effective enough stick but it's two pound more than the Microblaster, for less performance.



MARK **With its black casing and yellow trimmings the Zipstik looks as impressive as it performs. From the outset the stick feels 'worn in', each movement creates a responsive click. The robust construction carried it easily through the waggling part of the test – no surprise since I've had one for three years without any trouble at all. Travel is fairly long but I always felt in control. For my money I would choose this.**

Rating: ★★★★

MACH 1

Cheetah £10.95

PHIL Another flight sim-type stick, the Mach 1 looks just a bit tacky. There's no shortage of fire buttons though, with two on the handle and two on the base. There's also an autofire switch on the base – and it works!

By far the most disappointing aspect is the looseness of the shaft and the ridiculously-long stick travel. Responsiveness is poor and we commend Cheetah for their bravery in offering a 12 month guarantee. At almost eleven quid it's poor value for money.



MARK **To avoid embarrassment let's keep this short. Four suckers make for good table-top play but it's too big for the hand. Responsiveness is generally inadequate, but the fire buttons are amazing, there's four of them, none of which are much use as they require severe bashing to work.**

Rating: ★½

MICROBLASTER

Replay £12.95

PHIL This is a decidedly normal-looking stick with a ball handle and two fire buttons on the base. A metal shaft ensures good durability, as well as a nice solid feel. Microswitches for the fire buttons and stick directions make the Microblaster very responsive, especially with the very short stick travel. The stick is a tiny bit stiff for hand-held use, however, and is better placed on a table.

A fine, solidly-built joystick, suitable for all types of game and my pick of the bunch.



MARK **In my opinion, this very robust stick feels a little too stiff for very responsive play. In the hand the Microblaster is fairly comfortable, but on a table the rubber studs don't hold it as steady as the Zipstik. A good stick, in short, but I prefer the Zipstik.**

Rating: ★★★★

THE CRYSTAL IS CLEARED

In our first Sticks In The Mud feature (Issue 60) we complained that a hard twist on the handle of a Crystal joystick would pop the handle out of its casing. As a consequence the joystick has been altered slightly and now not even the Ed can bust it. This indestructible version gets three and a half stars and comes in two transparent types, Clear (£14.99), and Turbo (£16.99) with working autofire and sucker feet.

That's not all folks, Konix have two more sticks due out soon. Until then remember our opinions are just that, and sometimes even we can't agree. What we can unreservedly recommend is that you keep your receipt so you can prove your stick broke after eleven months use, not eleven years. To get any use of your stick bear in mind none of these joysticks, with the exception of the Star Fighter, will work with the +2 or +3 joystick interfaces without a small converter – such as the Frel adaptor (£2.50 – see the CRASH Hypermarket, page 95).



A PRIZE FIT FOR PRINCE!!

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SANXION

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Not that an alien invasion would worry me too much, by the looks of some of the CRASH mob they may have already landed. Thalamus are the distinctly extraterrestrial sounding software house responsible for remixing (pseudo-trendy speak for converting) the original C64 game for the Spectrum. Anyway, they were on the dog and bone to me the other day with offers of prizes for this very competition.

First prize for one lucky person is a high-tech toy called Eye Of The Storm, it's an amusing coffee table gizmo consisting of a gas-filled glass globe with electricity sparking inside. By moving your hands over it you can cause some great lightning-like displays, as Prince did on his *Lovesexy* tour and video. Also on offer is a Thalamus T-shirt and a copy of *Sanxion - The Spectrum Remix.* Five second-prize winners will receive a copy of the game and a Thalamus T-shirt, and a further twenty people will get a copy of the game. How to win . . . Just answer the simple questions below and you could soon be spending many happy hours playing God and creating your very own storms. Please send all entries to us before May 3, and the word (well, meow) of Tiddles the office cat is final. Send all entries to 'IT'LL BE OUT SOON' COMP, CRASH, PO Box 10, LUDLOW, Shropshire SY8 1DB.

1 What is a Stavros Fasoulas?
a) A Slavonic dance;
b) the original programmer of Sanxion;
c) a contagious disease.

2 What is a thalamus?
a) A Canadian beer;
b) a complicated cloud structure;
c) part of the human brain.

3 Who converted the Spectrum version of Sanxion?
a) Softstorm Developments;
b) Thunderstorm Developments;
c) Rainstorm Developments.

4 What nationality is the original programmer of Sanxion?
a) Startish;
b) Endish;
c) Finnish.

PHILIPPE ULRICH / DIDIER BOUCHON

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CECCO'S LOG

Stardate: 23 December 1988

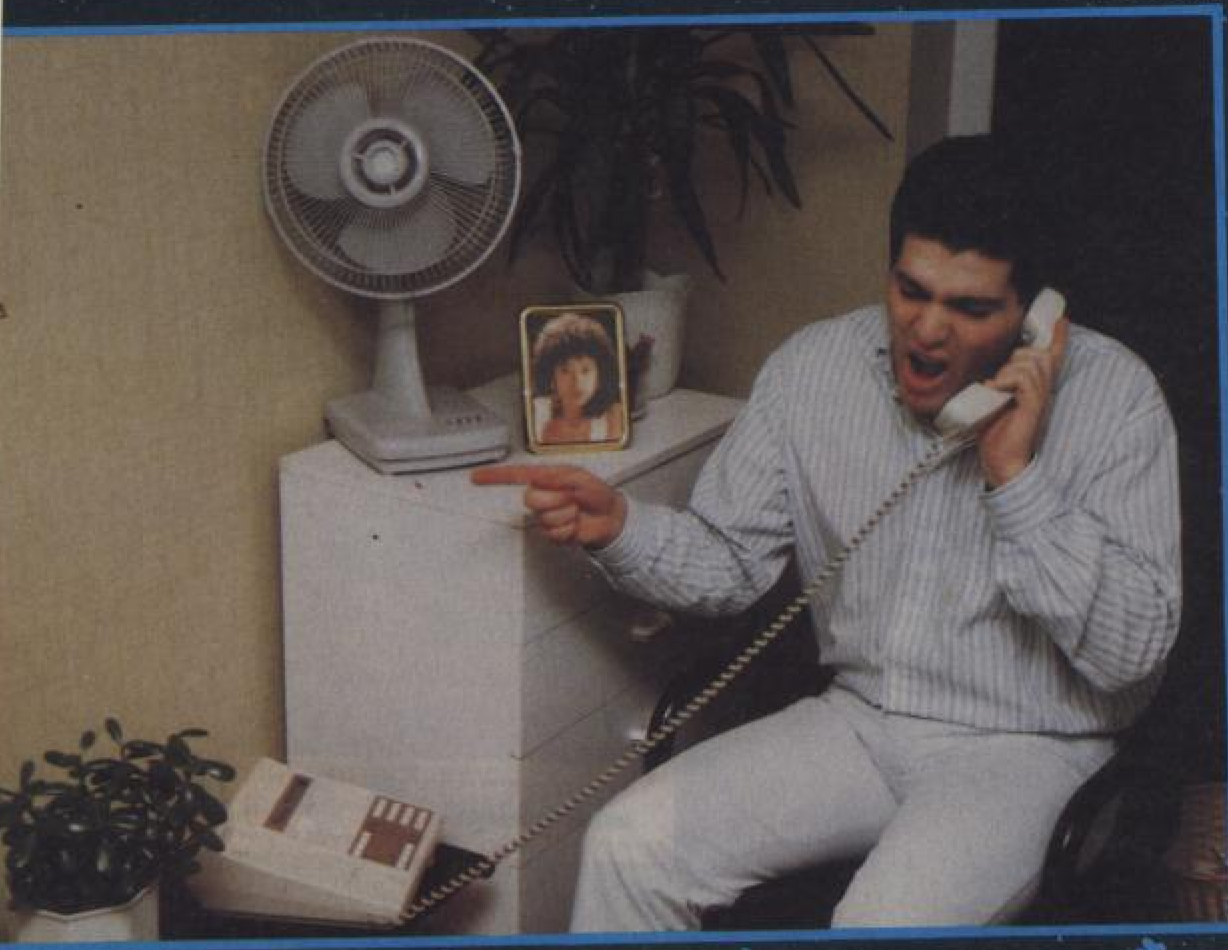
Well, I bloody never. Just when I thought I'd gracefully ended the majestic run of Cecco's Log, a much unwanted request from Hewson's ex-page 3 stunner, Toni 'how about a commission?' Waknell, heralds the conception of just one more log to grace the pages of his splendidly effervescent rag.

I tried my damnedest to dodge doing my duty, but those ruthless blighters at CRASH and Hewson (sounds like a tacky comedy duo) took advantage of my well know weakness for luxury items and bribed me with a bag of nuts and a lifetime's free subscription to CRASH. I'm quite surprised that they're not sick to the back teeth with all those silly photos of me holding cats, jumping off castles and generally pratting around.

Stardate: 25 December 1988

I'm sorry to disappoint everybody, but the most exciting thing I did over Christmas was take aspirin. My girlfriend and I were decked out with flu and tonsillitis. Which reminds me: why are there no aspirin in the jungle?

Because the parrots eat 'em all. (Awful joke courtesy of Chris Hinsley.)



Stardate: 3 January 1989

As with most games, the nearer *Stormlord* approaches completion, so does a severe memory shortage. I managed to substantially alleviate this problem by compressing the maps. A single, expanded map in *Stormlord* used up over 2500 bytes of precious memory. Using an effective map compression algorithm, this has been reduced to under 500 bytes – a compression ratio of about 80% (yawn – Ed).

Stardate: 6 January 1989

If you're technically minded, you will know that the old Speccy is a funny thing, and that any code placed below memory location 32768 runs about 20% slower than code placed above it. What I've been having to do is constantly rearrange the program and place any non-time critical code, such as the front-end and high score stuff, below 32768 to leave as much room spare above. The difference this makes is quite startling. If I place the scroll routine below 32768, instead of *Stormlord* running at a fast, smooth and flicker-free 25 frames per second (as it does normally), it drops down to a flickery 17 frames a second. This is a sobering reminder of how near the mark I am as far as the Spectrum's capabilities go (har, har! – Ed).



Stardate: 12 January 1989

Did you see the news about yet another computer virus that is supposed to wreck IBM compatible PCs on the 13th of the month? Being the careful chap that I am, the first thing I did was change the date on my PC to the 13th to see what would happen. (A potential excuse for not doing any work should not be sniffed at.)

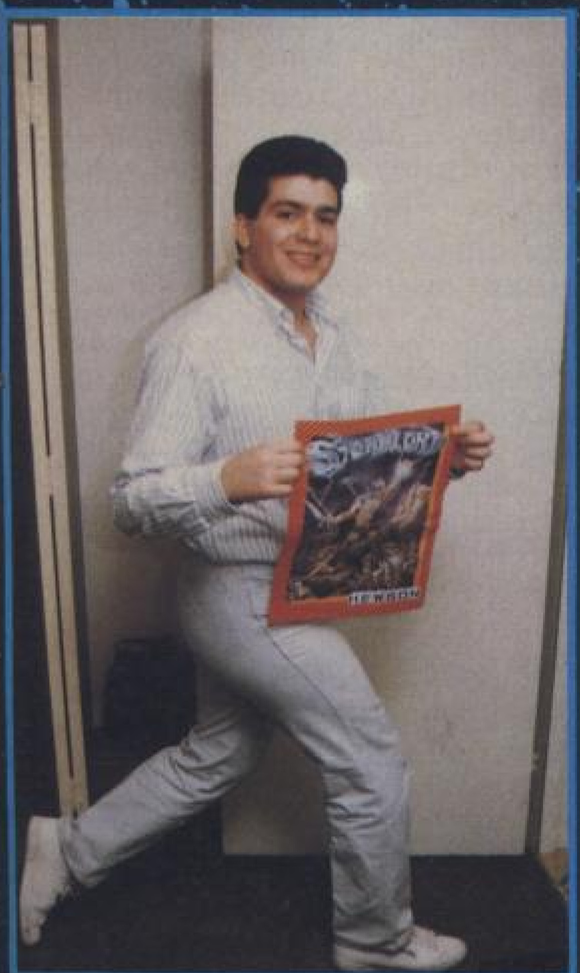
Stardate: 16 January 1989

Nick and I arrive at the Hewson 'farm' as Andrew calls it. I proudly load up *Stormlord* for Paul Chamberlain, the software producer (people in software houses like these fancy titles). I point out the subtly erotic animated sequence at the beginning of the game and, quite frankly, I'm disgusted by the vulgar reaction. There I was, trying to symbolise the subtle neoeroticism of a surrealist macrocosm, only to be faced with a barrage of:



(The kind of people I have to work with!)

Apart from this outburst, the meeting went very well. I'm glad everyone agreed that *Stormlord* is totally different from any of my previous games as I've been getting pretty wound up by a couple of people who reckon I can only program games of the *Exolon/Cybernoid* variety. A distinctive style does not a mere rehash make . . . (so there). (And there was I thinking it was subtitled *Exolon II* – Ed.)



Stardate: 20 January 1989

Nick and I zoom off to Hewson's for the celebration of Paul Chamberlain's birthday. With no expense spared we have brought him a vastly-valuable filofax that looks like a leather jacket, and something that Nick insisted on purchasing – a strange little packet containing these peculiar things called 'fundoms' (funny Dominics??). (Har, bloody, har! – Ed.)

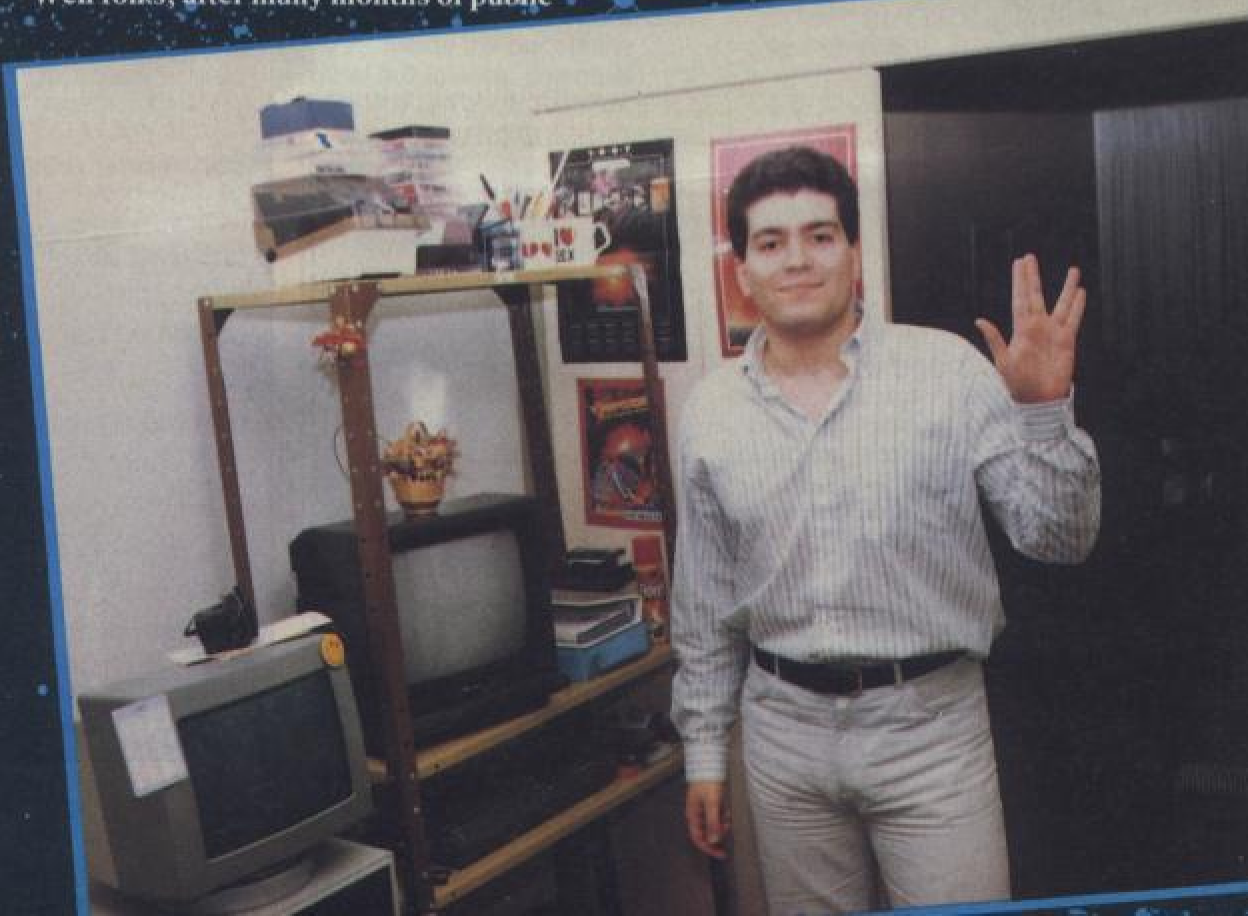
Stardate: 22 January 1989

Well folks, after many months of public humiliation, I hereby announce the (very) final termination of Cecco's Log. I hope you've enjoyed this insight into the development of *Stormlord* (and *Cybernoid II* come to that). My next article for CRASH will be called Cecco's Bog in which I will be reviewing all the new toilets that come onto the market. So send in your votes for the CRASH Readers' Top Ten toilet chart to one of Ludlow's foremost khazi connoisseurs, Dominic Handy.

This is where I must bid everybody 'Farewell', as I end the termination of the absolute, past the penultimate, final Cecco's Log (got that Dom?). Please don't grieve as I bring to a close one of the greatest eras (!) in computer journalism. A final goodbye and fondest regards.

'And now, the time is here . . . '

(Has he gone . . . ? Great, I've been dying to chuck away this *Cybernoid II* sweatshirt for ages! – Ed.)



IT'S YOU WE ANSWER TO!!

100 GAMES AND 250 POSTERS TO GIVE AWAY!!

Hands up those of you who fancy winning one of fifty copies of Ocean's *WEC Le Mans*. Based on the gruelling 24-hour endurance car race, *WEC Le Mans* (reviewed this very issue) is a rip-roaring race game which takes the brave player around some of the most death-defying tracks in the world (move over Nigel Mansell). If you would like the chance to win a copy of the game, just ring the Competition Hotline number and listen to the three easy peasy questions. Write down your answers on the coupon provided here, then listen very carefully to the tie breaking sentence and complete it (in no more than 20 words), it's as simple as that.

The second *Hotline Competition* comes from the Darling people themselves – Code Masters. *Treasure Island Dizzy* is the name of their latest game, and relates the further adventures of the lovable egg shaped hero Dizzy (first introduced in Issue 46). The first fifty winners receive copies of *Treasure Island Dizzy*, whilst 250 lucky runners-up will be receiving a 1989 Code Masters calender/poster. Again, ring the Hotline Competition and solve the puzzle set. Normal competition rules apply.





HOTLINE COMPETITION FORM

ANSWERS
WEC Le Mans

1 ....
2 ....
3 ....
TIE BREAKER ....
....

Treasure Island Dizzy

....
....
....
....

SEND TO: **HOTLINE COMP 1, CRASH, PO Box 10, LUDLOW, Shropshire SY8 1HD.** Entries by April 3.

Keeping up-to-the-minute with CRASH

Printed below are the three *CRASH Hotline* numbers. They're open 24 hours a day and each has 160 lines to prevent the number being engaged. Phone calls will only cost you 25p per minute during off-peak time (Mon-Fri 6pm-8am, Saturdays, Sundays and Bank Holidays) or 38p per minute during standard and peak time (8am-6pm Mon-Fri). If you are using your parents' phone or even someone else's, please ask them first!

Line One: ☎0898 555082 *CRASH NEWS AND REVIEWS. All the latest software news as soon as we here it, with thoughts on games that just missed our deadline.*

Line Two: ☎0898 555083 *NICK ROBERTS'S PLAYING TIPS. Hints 'n' tips on the latest releases from Mr Crucial himself.*

Line Three: ☎0898 555084 *COMPETITION HOTLINE. Listen carefully for we shall say this only once (every two minutes!) and loads of prizes are up for grabs every month!*

The CRASH Hotline is brought to you by CRASH Ltd in conjunction with Chatterbox Ltd. So there!

Nick Roberts's

PLAYING TIPS



Another bladder-busting Playing Tips is now on-line. Full of POKEs, tips and some really impressive maps (if you thought the *Last Ninja 2* map was good you should see this month's *Dizzy 2*, amazing!). Two games have both tips *and* POKEs, *R-Type* and *Operation Wolf*. Last issue was supposed to have a map of *Game Over II* but it had to be dropped at the last minute due to lack of space, but you can enjoy it in all its glory this month.

I have had quite a number of requests for POKEs over the phone in the last few days. One game that keeps cropping up is Activision's *Afterburner*, along with *Batman*, *Netherworld* and *Total Eclipse*, so if anyone can oblige . . .

Talking of *Batman*, I have been sent literally hundreds of solutions to A Bird In The Hand, but not one for A Fête Worse Than Death. I've printed the first solution this issue so we can now get cracking on the other half of this comic strip character's antics.

Now I have got that off my chest (still can't get rid of this cough, though) it's time once again to go through the keyhole . . . no, sorry, into the tips.

SLY STALLONE SOLUTION

Mr Stallone may have had some hassle negotiating minefields, exploring Russian camps and laying boobytraps but that sort of thing comes naturally to Richard Dobbs **of Cleethorpes. He has sent in a step-by-step solution to section one with tips for the rest.**

SECTION ONE SOLUTION

R, r, r, u, u, u, pick up arrows, use arrows instead of knife, u, r, r, pick up first aid kit, use when energy is low, d, r, d, d, d, l, pick up ammo box use when weapons are low, l, pick up infra-red goggles, r, r, u, u, l, u, l, l, d, d, l, u, l, pick up ammo box, u, r, u, l, d, pick up goggles battery, u, u, pick up mine detector, d, d, r, r, r, u, u, r, d, pick up light key, u, u, l, u, u, l, l, on left wall is a blue switch – press it, you should hear a tone, the electric door should now be safe. Now retrace your steps until you arrive where the arrows were. Go down to the yellow door and then right, d, pick up pistol silencer, u, r, pick up first aid, d, r, go through yellow door and down, d, r, pick up light tube, u, u, u, go through electric door. You are now outside. U, u, u, u, u, u, you should see a white door on the left wall, use light key to open it. You are now inside another fort! BEWARE, in this fort there are infra-red intruder detectors. So before you go anywhere use the goggles battery and then the goggles. The lines will now be visable. If you step on a line, the alarm will go off. L, u, get first aid, d, r, u, get pistol, use pistol and pistol silencer for a new weapon, d, l, l, u, l, l, d, d, u, get dark key, d, r, use dark key to open door, get mine detector battery, go back out of door, switch back to infra-red goggles, u, u, l, l, u, u, use dark key to open door, d, press switch on the wall, this makes the trap door (located elsewhere) disappear. Go back out and turn back to the goggles, d, d, r, r, r, you will see a blue door, use dark key to open it, get the insulated glove, go back out and switch goggles on, r, r, r, u, u, r, u, r, use dark key to open door, d, d, use insulated glove to open electric door. You are now back outside. Use the mine detector battery and mine detector, d, d, d, l, d, r, u, dodge mines, u, u, u, dodge mines, u, r, r, r, d, d, d, r, through door, use light tube, d, r, d, pick up uniform, u, l, u, l, d, l,h d, d, d, pick up ammo box, d, go through yellow door, d, get explosive arrows, u, l, d, d, d, go through yellow door, u, u, pick up first aid, d, go back through door, l, l, if you're short of ammo pick up ammo box, u, u, pick up machine gun, u. You should now be standing outside a white door with three control boxes to one side, inside the door is the Colonel but to enter you must destroy the control boxes. First, put on the uniform and change your weapon to explosive arrows. Now shoot the control boxes and enter the prison, you will see the Colonel lying on a bed, go to the left of the bed and he will get up and he is free!

SECTION TWO TIPS

★ The eight bombs to be primed are quite easy to find, but keep moving.
★ The machine gun is the best weapon on this stage.
★ When you think there are no more bombs in the section, go north. There will be a gate exit. Blow this up with explosive arrows. Now go on to another section, there are usually two to three bombs in each section.
★ The helicopter is your escape target.
★ The gate exit is at the middle in the top of the section.

SECTION THREE TIPS

★ There is not a lot that can help on this stage. Just keep an eye on the tank's firing temperature and try to get the other tanks and bunkers first because they do the most damage. When the distance meter says 0 you will have completed the game.

P-P-PICK UP A PENGUIN

It was a peaceful night in Gotham City, millionaire Bruce Wayne had just settled down with his evening paper and all seemed well. Suddenly a letter came through the door. GASP! It was the complete solution to Penguin's A Bird In The Hand, one side of his new game from Ocean/ Special FX – and there wasn't a POW! or KORWAP! in sight. It had come from Mark Hopwood **of Winchester.**

KEY: l=left, r=right, u=up through door, d=down through door.

L, pick up nose, use nose, d, pick up tool, use tool, l, pick up batarang, use batarang, r, r, pick up door key, l, l, l, l, l, l, l, go up ladder, l, l, l, l, pick up rope, r, r, use lock pick, u, u, r, u, r, r, d, r, r, u, r, pick up lift key, l, d, l, l, u, l, l, d, stand on lift, use lift key, u, r, r, d, l, d, l, pick up dart, pick up toast, use toast, r, r, r, pick up game disk, u, l, u, l, pick up egg, use egg, use rope, climb up rope, pick up magnet, use magnet, use dart, pick up pass, go down rope, r, d, r, d, l, l, l, u, r, u, l, l, d, stand on lift, use lift key, l, d, d, l, l, go down ladder, r, pick up sweet, use sweet, r, pick up shoe, use shoe, l, l, l, l, l, l, l, l, l, l, go up ladder, r, r, pick up pop, use pop, r, r, pick up torch, l, l, l, l, go down ladder, r, r, stand in front of door, use pass, u, use torch, l, l, pick up tape, r, r, u, r, u, l, l, l, u, use tape, l, u, pick up cake, use cake, r, d, r, d, r, r, use door key, u, r, r, d, l, u, pick up trumpet, use trumpet, r, use game disk. 100% completed, computer stopped.

TREASURE ISLAND DIZZY II











POACHED, BOILED AND FRIED!!

You may remember the brilliant map of *Dizzy* by Paul Forsyth back in Issue 47. The new game starring this little eggy character, *Treasure Island Dizzy*, has been out for a while now so Paul couldn't wait to repeat the process.

SOLUTION

1 Get solid chest. Drop beside cliff.
2 Head left and get rubber snorkle. Hit stone on the way to lower platform on screen below.
3 Go and get glass sword and camera.
4 Head back to beach and drop sword and camera.
5 Enter water and get salt water spade.
6 Arrange objects so spade can be dropped before snorkle.
7 Go to wobbling stone and drop spade on it. Go back and get camera and sword. Enter water. Stand on bubble and walk on across the rocks.
8 Give camera to storekeeper. Take boat to pier and drop.
9 Get axe. Drop sword on gravestone. Do not go down gravestone. Get Bible.
10 Cross ocean. Drop axe on bridge but don't go down yet. Arrange objects so that neither Bible or snorkle can be dropped on picking up other object.
11 Go down bridge. Get treasure. Take treasure to store keeper and drop outboard motor on pier.
12 Get golden key from pier. Go down gravestone. Get dynamite. Head right until you see a room with half a barrel blocking an entrance. Drop golden key on this. Go down. Get microwave oven.
13 Cross ocean again. Drop oven on beach. Get infra-red detonator and go to mine. Drop dynamite beside the offending rock. Go behind the rock on the same screen and drop detonator. Get bag of gold coins.
14 Go back to beach and get oven. Go to storekeeper. Give him the bag of gold coins. Take petrol to pier and drop. Give oven to storekeeper and take ignition key to pier and drop. The boat will now move. Jump on boat and walk right. Read message. You have finished the easy part of Dizzy II. Now find the coins!

MESSAGES

1 Danger! Blasting Area!
2 Code Masters advertisement.
3 The Snoggles tree house complex. Deserted now, since the threat of tourists ruining the peaceful life.
4 Code Masters advertisement.
5 Legend has it that Hoojaw the pirate, buried here, still guards over his treasure.
6 Code Masters advertisement.
7 Code Masters advertisement.
8 Warning! Magic wall of water!
9 The smugglers' cave. Ingenious glass sword on gravestone lock design, copyright Roger – infamous pirate.
10 No boarding the boat until it is moving!
11 You've found Blackbeard's secret kitchen. Ideal for those midnight snacks!
12 Congratulations! You have successfully solved all the puzzles and truly earned your freedom. Good luck Dizzy.



KEY

A Bag of gold coins
B Gold coin hidden behind scenery
C Gold coin
D Sinclair Abuser mag
E A sharp glass sword
F Small video camera
G Infra-red detonator
H Rubber snorkle
I Tube of toothpaste
J An empty solid chest
K Salt water spade
L Sticks of dynamite
M The woodcutter's axe
N The cursed treasure
O An old Holy Bible
P An old empty bucket
Q A large golden key
R A microwave oven

CHEAT MODE MOTEL

Another month, another fun set of cheats for you to use if you don't like POKEs (or if you can't be bothered to type them in, like me – Ed) (or if you think they're always wrong, ha, ha! – Phil). Cheat Mode Motel has been so popular over the last few months that I could never print everything. Almost every other letter is for this section – there have even been reservations made over the phone to avoid the rush! Here is a selection of the best . . .

3-D STOCK CAR CHAMPIONSHIP

If you are getting fed up of the way your game is going (I know I did) press BREAK, 0 and 9 together to skip through the course you are on.
(occupant: **John Pagan**)



IKARI WARRIORS

While still on the loading screen with the tune try typing (one key at a time) PETELIVES. When you start playing you should have infinite lives.
(occupant: **Sander Berg**)

OPERATION WOLF

1 If you have a 48K Spectrum, load the 128K version and you will start on Level 6 with full ammunition.
2 You can do the old header trick. Load the first part of the level the computer is searching for, then forward the tape to the second part of the level *you* want to play. Now start the tape again. (It helps if you use another tape recorder for the forwarding.)
3 When it says COMMUNICATIONS SET-UP, at the start of each level, hold down as many keys as possible (ie, Nicko hasn't found out what the exact keys are yet! – Ed), the screen will freeze. Let go and start the level then hold down all the keys again and you will get the message OK CLEARED THIS SCENE. You can keep doing this until you complete the game.
(occupants: **Marc Rickard** and **Christopher Diebson**)

TEFAL TWOSOME

With all the old classic games being rereleased The Tefal Men **thought it about time the POKEs were reprinted to go along with them. So here are two routines for the golden games** *Airwolf* **and** *Bombjack***.**

AIRWOLF

```
10  REM AIRWOLF
    (ENCORE VERSION)
20  REM BY THE TEFAL
    MEN (MEL & STE)
30  REM **MULTIFACE 1 –
    POKE 45982,0
40  REM RUN THIS
    PROGRAM AND WHEN
    THE (C) 1982 AMSTRAD
    (OR SINCLAIR)
    MESSAGE APPEARS
    STOP THE TAPE,
    PRESS ENTER AND
    TYPE RANDOMIZE
    USR 40000. THEN
    START THE TAPE
    AGAIN FROM THE
    BEGINNING.
50  LOAD ""CODE 59035
60  POKE 59032,49
70  POKE 59033,191
80  POKE 59034,93
90  FOR F=59072 TO 59081
100 READ A: POKE F,A:
    NEXT F
110 DATA 175, 50, 158, 179,
    50
120 DATA 72, 92, 195, 195,
    230
130 FOR F=40000 TO 40013
140 READ A: POKE F,A:
    NEXT F
150 DATA 33, 152, 230, 17, 0,
    91
160 DATA 1, 50, 0, 237, 176
170 DATA 195, 0, 91
180 POKE 59057,0
190 POKE 59058,91
200 RANDOMIZE USR 4660
```

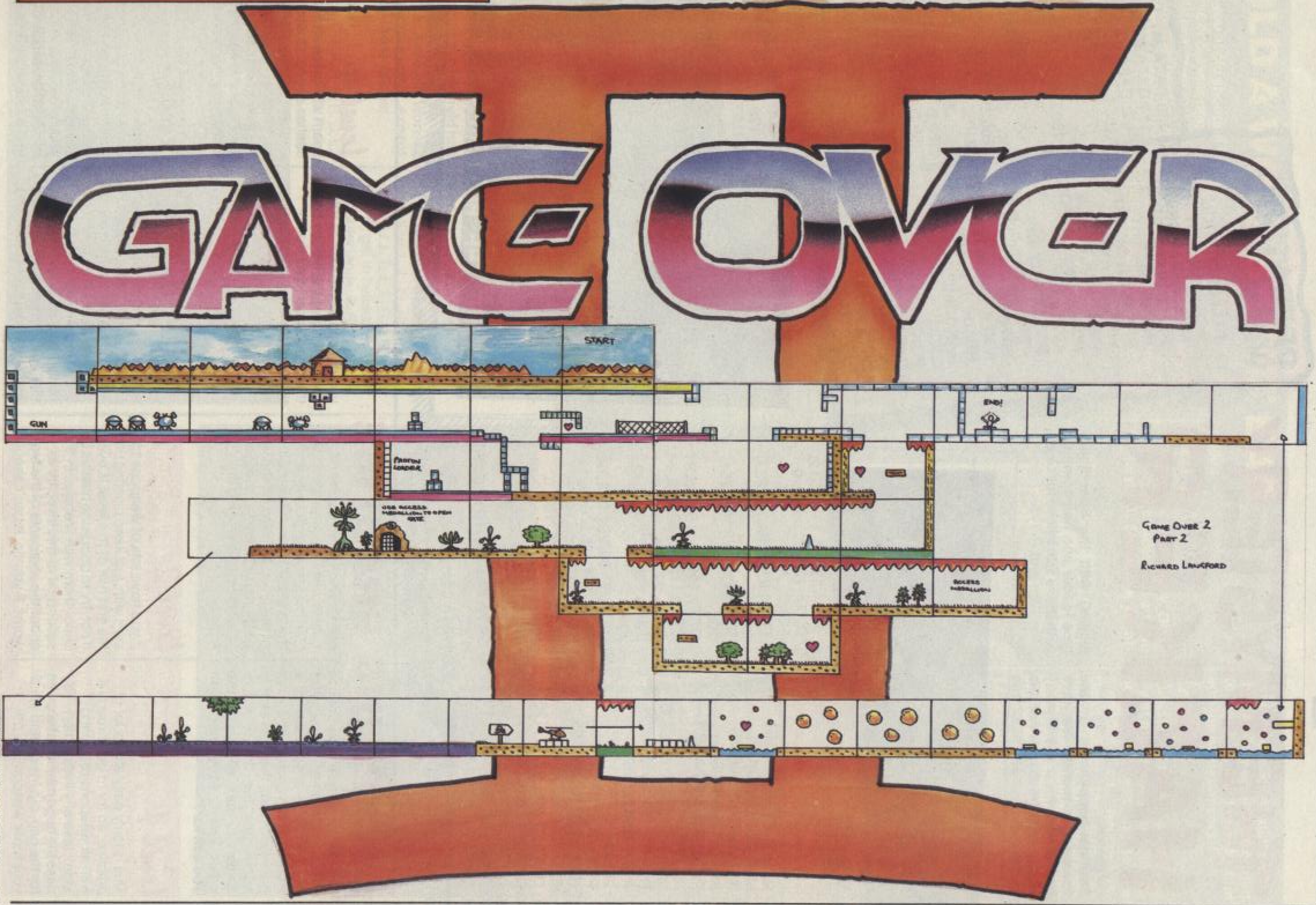


BOMBJACK

```
10  REM BOMBJACK
    (ENCORE VERSION)
20  REM BY THE TEFAL
    MEN (MEL & STE)
30  REM **MULTIFACE 1 –
    POKE 49984,0
40  CLEAR 29877
50  LOAD ""CODE
60  POKE 65533,1
70  POKE 65534,91
80  FOR F=23297 TO 23303
90  READ A
100 POKE F,A
110 NEXT F
120 DATA 175, 50, 64, 195
130 DATA 195, 75, 193
140 RANDOMIZE USR
    65465
```



Here is a brilliantly drawn map of Dinamic's *Game Over II* from Richard Langford. It's to go along with the tips, also in this issue . . . somewhere!



THE MYSTERY HACKER

Strange happenings at the towers this month. We have had a visit from the Mystery Hacker **of Grimsby. He (for it is of the male gender) has been playing with the Speedlock-type loader and has come up with these two hacks for** *Operation Wolf* **and** *R-Type*.

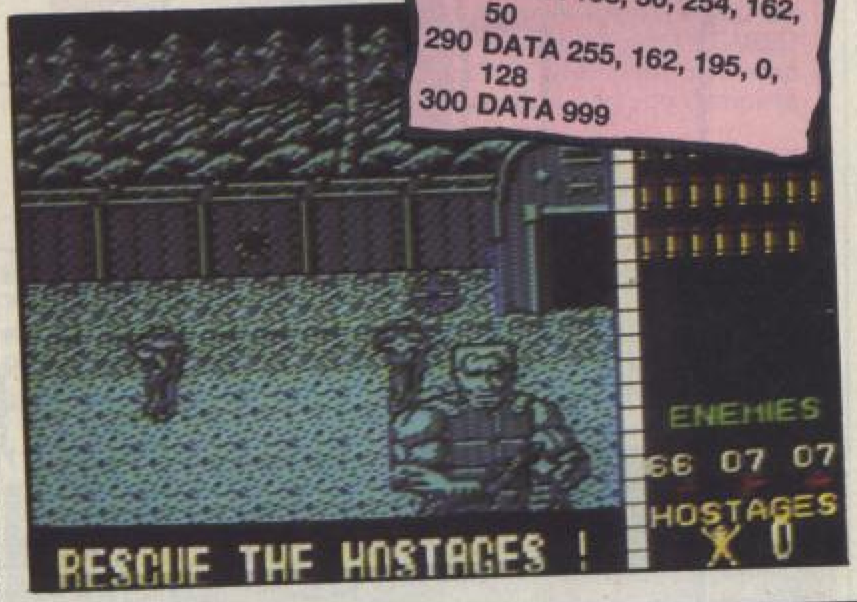
OPERATION WOLF

```
10  REM OPERATION
    WOLF HACK BY THE
    MYSTERY HACKER
20  REM INFINITE AMMO,
    NEVER DIE, TRY
    PRESSING QWERT
    WHILE PLAYING!
30  REM **MULTIFACE 1 –
    POKE 40691,0: POKE
    40710,0 **
    MULTIFACE 128 –
    POKE 40722,0: POKE
    40756,0
40  FOR A=23296 TO 65535
50  READ F: IF F=999 THEN
    RANDOMIZE USR
    23296
60  POKE A,F: NEXT A
100 DATA 243, 62, 255, 55,
    221
110 DATA 33, 203, 92, 17, 162
120 DATA 10, 205, 86, 5, 48
130 DATA 241, 175, 50, 35, 93
140 DATA 205, 22, 93, 30, 101
150 DATA 33, 180, 244, 1, 52
160 DATA 10, 53, 11, 35, 120
170 DATA 177, 32, 249, 29,
    123
180 DATA 211, 254, 32, 237,
    62
190 DATA 202, 50, 106, 251,
    205
200 DATA 92, 251, 62, 200, 50
210 DATA 123, 251, 205, 109,
    251
220 DATA 33, 76, 91, 175, 50
230 DATA 43, 252, 34, 22, 254
240 DATA 49, 0, 0, 195, 222
250 DATA 254, 62, 201, 50, 80
260 DATA 254, 205, 64, 254,
    175
270 DATA 50, 6, 159, 50, 233
280 DATA 158, 50, 254, 162,
    50
290 DATA 255, 162, 195, 0,
    128
300 DATA 999
```



R-TYPE

```
10  REM R-TYPE BY THE
    MYSTERY HACKER
20  REM INFINITE LIVES
    AND ATTEMPTS
30  REM **MULTIFACE 1 –
    37374,0
40  FOR A=23296 TO 65535
50  READ F: IF F=999 THEN
    RANDOMIZE USR
    23296
60  POKE A,F: NEXT A
100 DATA 243, 62, 255, 55,
    221
110 DATA 33, 203, 92, 17, 195
120 DATA 11, 205, 86, 5, 48
130 DATA 241, 175, 50, 35, 93
140 DATA 205, 22, 93, 30, 119
150 DATA 33, 147, 243, 1, 85
160 DATA 11, 52, 11, 35, 120
170 DATA 177, 32, 249, 29,
    123
180 DATA 211, 254, 32, 237,
    62
190 DATA 202, 50, 123, 251,
    205
200 DATA 109, 251, 33, 68, 91
210 DATA 175, 50, 43, 252, 34
220 DATA 22, 254, 49, 0, 0
230 DATA 195, 222, 254, 62,
    201
240 DATA 50, 80, 254, 205, 64
250 DATA 254, 33, 90, 91, 17
260 DATA 22, 106, 1, 10, 0
270 DATA 237, 176, 195, 0,
    106
280 DATA 175, 50, 254, 145,
    50
290 DATA 149, 146, 195, 253,
    133
300 DATA 999
```



R-TYPE ING PRACTISE

You lucky people who bought Electric Dreams' *R-Type*! **Not only do have a scorcher of a POKE for the game but** John 'I hate aliens' McGhee **has sent in some tips for the first five levels . . . and all this in the same issue, what more can you ask for?**

Level 1

This is fairly easy after a lot of practise, so try to get through it with all weapons remaining (don't lose any lives either). To pass the huge rotating alien, wait for the gap, nip inside and send your force weapon into the alien's weak spot. Dodge any bullets while the alien explodes. Use the force again to destroy the large(ish) aliens near the end of the level. To finish off the last nasty you only need to shoot the small green head using the force.

Level 2

If you have lots of weapons to start with, just keep blasting until the first half of this level is over. If not, try to dodge the nasties or shoot them with fireballs. In the second bit of this level, try to shoot the segments of the big worm. If you do, it can't shoot you. Kill the mega-alien at the end by firing at the blobby pod thing (technical term) that appears from the top of its head while dodging the worm.

Level 3

Collect the jewels and use the force to destroy the gun batteries on the humungous space ship. Keep firing without crashing into bullets, walls, or the ship itself. At the end of the level, fire the force backwards over the top of the ship to shoot the purple block. If you can't manage this, keep shooting until the ship explodes from boredom!

Level 4

Learn where the wall-building nasties appear from so you can kill them quickly. Keep the force as rearguard at all times. Learn the movements of the end-of-level guardian and dodge bullets while shooting to obliterate it.

Level 5

Apparently a doddle (John completed it first go). Shoot for all you're worth, dodging the large caterpillars and blowing up the aliens that fire plasma bolts with your force. Fire the force into the middle of the cluster of asteroids and space ship inside will expire.

HOLD A WOLF BY THE EAR

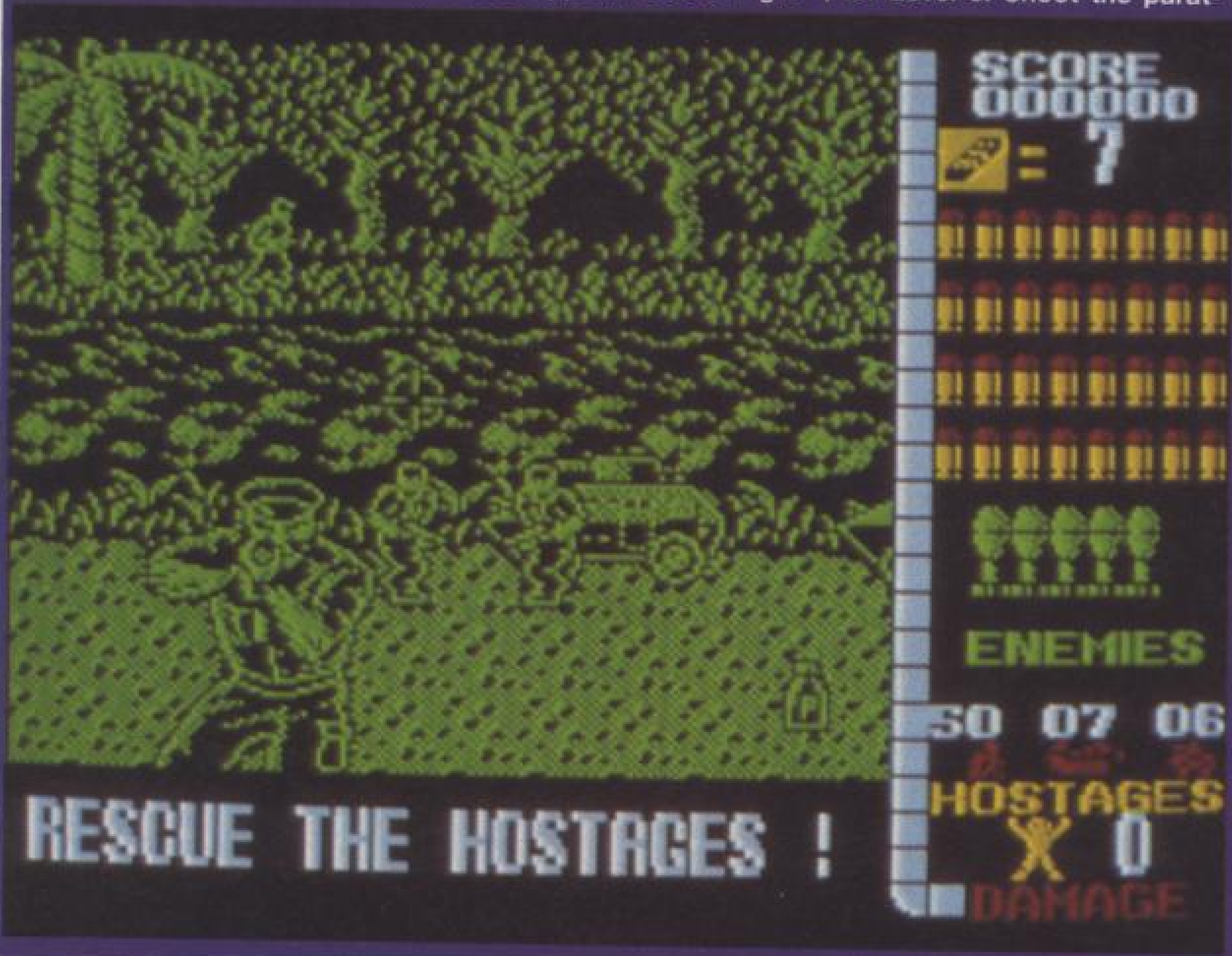
To help you avoid shooting the odd nurse or massacring innocent citizens here are some tips for the Number One game at Christmas, Ocean's *Operation Wolf*.

Level 1

Keep your sights away from the left-hand side of the screen. This is where the nurses appear. Use 3-4 grenades.

Level 2

This level is really easy. Don't use any grenades, save them for Level 3. Shoot the paratroopers quickly. Watch out for the little boy who runs from left to right. Shoot the wild foul and the breakdancers.



Level 3

You should have a good supply of grenades, your going to need it. It's best only to use grenades on helicopters. Don't shoot the girls (remember, you can stop shooting!). Your damage is completely restored after completing Level 3.

Level 4

The massive butch men with the big guns can only be shot in the head, so don't let your sight wonder below their head height. Always shoot helicopters first. Your ammo is restocked at the end of the level.

Level 5

The hostages are on this level, so be careful! Don't shoot the dynamite when an escaping hostage is onscreen, it kills him. Use all weapons, watch out for those hostages, they run right to left along the centre lane.

Level 6

The hostages again go from right to left. Just keep that gun going. Don't miss one potion bottle or grenade, they are vital.

GAME NOT OVER

Not only do I have a great map of this *Game Over* sequel but Richard Langford **of Enfield has sent in the solution so you should never have any worries about this game again, except dodging all those aliens!**

From the start . . . L, L, L, L, L, L, D, collect gun, R, R, R, R, R, R, D, L, collect proton loader, R, R, R, R, collect heart, L, L, L, U, lower exit right, collect heart, L, upper exit right, R, R, R, jump over gap in floor and fall down right-hand side of hole, collect heart, D, L, L, L, D, R, R, R, R, collect access medallion, L, L, D, collect heart, L, U, L, U, L, L, L, L, D, R, R, R, R, R, R, R, get in helicopter, when helicopter lands: R, R, R, R, R, R, R, R, U, L, L, L, walk up to prisoner to end the game!





I must say ta-ra once again, and get on with my essay for college (there's no rest for the wicked, or the crucial for that matter!). Some of the titles we get given these days are weird, but I suppose they have got to be done if I'm ever going to be an intellectual. Send all your stuff to the usual address . . . **Nick 'O' Roberts, Playing Tips, PO Box 10, LUDLOW, Shropshire SY8 1DB.**

A NEWSFIELD PUBLICATION £1.50

The Games machine

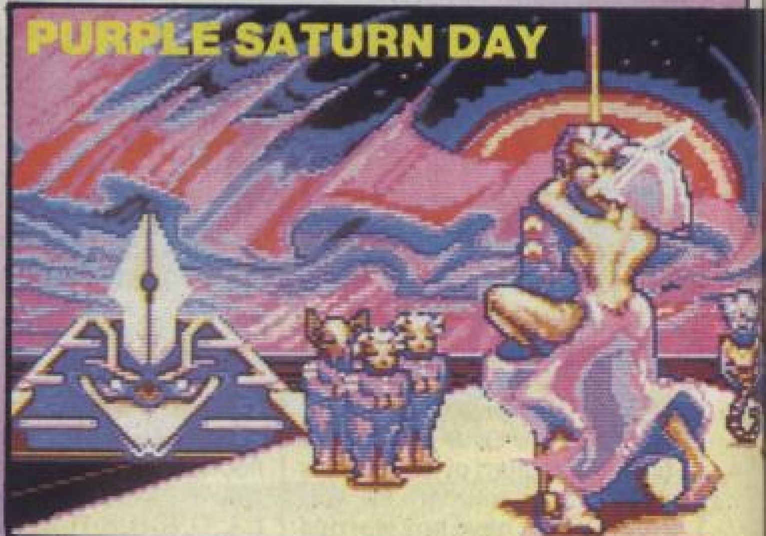
THE FUTURE IN YOUR HANDS

TX: 016 MARCH 1989

WATCH THIS SPACE!







■ FUNNY MONEY FROM THE FUTURE

CONSOLES BREAK THE POWER BARRIER



DIAL 0898 555080 AND WIN WEC LeMANS FROM OCEAN!

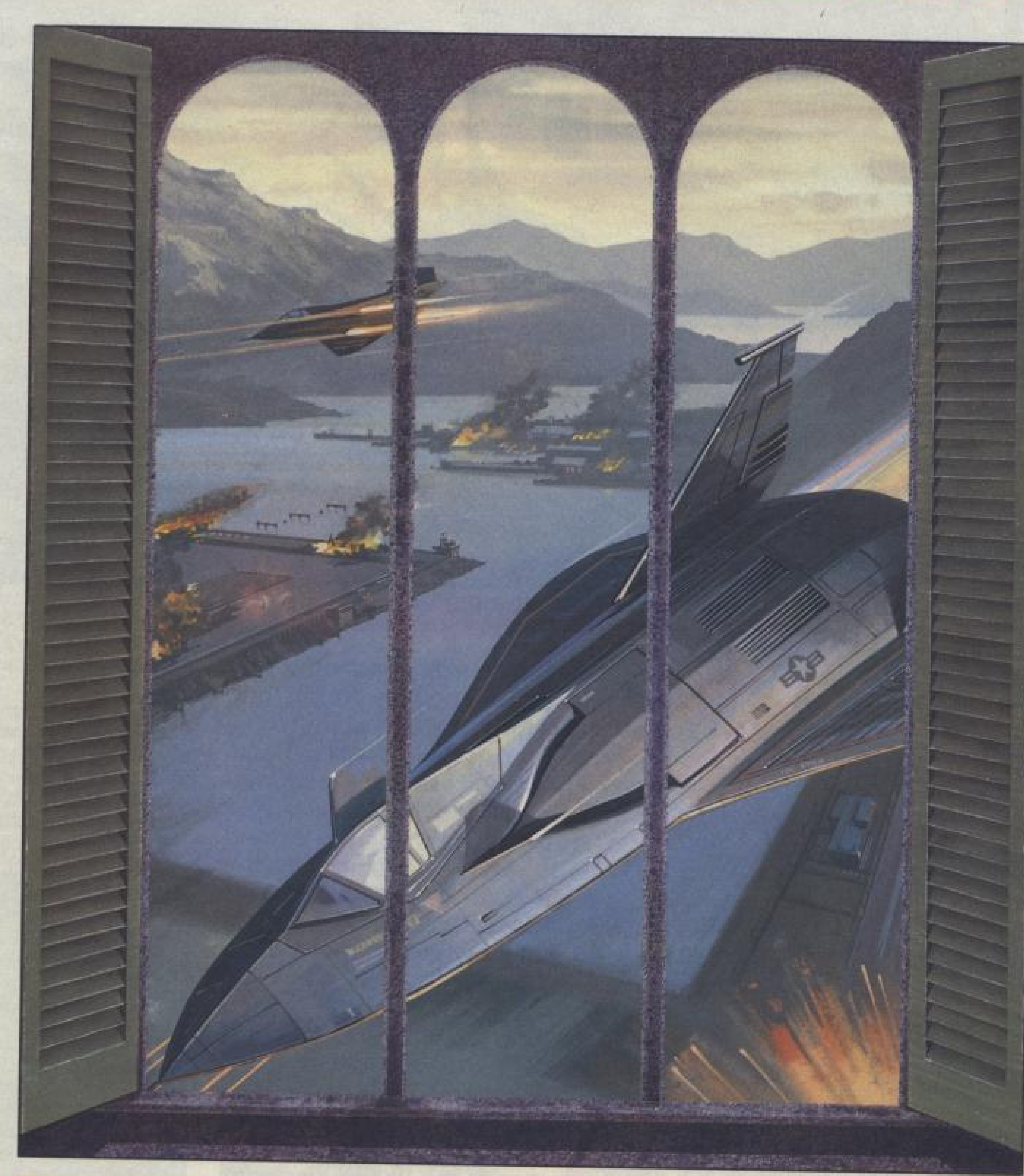


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COMPACT COIN-OP

PC Engine

NEC's PC Engine was launched a year and a half ago in Japan and instantly became one of the hottest consumer items around. The first production run sold out in a month due to arcade-quality graphics and sound from a 21000 yen (just under £100) machine little bigger than a paperback book. But then rumours started that Nintendo was applying pressure to stop it – Nintendo dominate the console market in the US and Japan, and buy all their chips from NEC. And in the UK NEC claimed that they had no plans whatsoever to launch the machine here anyway – the market wasn't big enough.

NEC still seem unlikely to launch the machine in the UK anytime soon – they're concentrating on Japan and the USA – but a full-scale, independent import company, Micromedia, has been started up with the express purpose of distributing the Engine, its peripherals and games in the United Kingdom. Since CRASH has already given one of these wonder machines away (Issue 55), we thought we'd have a detailed look at the Engine; what makes it tick, what the peripherals are, and its chances of success with new wonder machines due to appear here over the summer. And to tell you just how good the games are, or aren't, we had the reviewers have a bash too.

AT JUST 5½ inches square the PC Engine is not much bigger than a personal stereo with software supplied on ROM cards smaller than a credit card. This marvel of high-tech miniaturization is quite capable of producing coin-op conversions virtually indistinguishable from the original in graphics, sound and playability. For plug-in and go zapping the PC Engine wipes the floor with such crude consoles as the Nintendo and Sega Mastersystem, besides challenging the £400 Amiga as the most powerful home entertainment system.

The Engine's dazzling performance is achieved by a state-of-the-art 8-bit custom chip claimed to run at 18 MHz, which compares to 7.14 MHz for the Amiga. This amazing figure is fully demonstrated by the large, fast-moving sprites. Up to 64 sprites can be displayed simultaneously in colours chosen from a palette of 512. Sound is also well-catered for – the Engine has a six-channel, eight-octave stereo sound chip.

Games for the PC Engine are supplied on tiny ROM cards with two megabytes capability (standard 16-bit machines have only a quarter of that). Moreover since this memory is ROM-based, games need not be loaded – as soon as the card is slammed in, the

PHIL If you've ever wanted an arcade machine in your home, the amazing PC Engine is an all-purpose one. Near-perfect coin-op conversions are what this little maestro is all about. All the detailed sprites move so fast, I was very surprised to discover that the CPU is only 8-bit. Sound is also excellent – all games feature brilliant music, while the optional CD ROM player adds sound effects of unprecedented hi-fi quality.

However, despite its undoubted technical excellence, the PC Engine has yet to establish a big range of English language software. The limited range of games available consists mainly of shoot-'em-ups and arcade adventures with cute heroes and heroines. Without a keyboard it really isn't suited to complex adventures and strategy games. And at thirty quid a game, it'll take a lot of hard cash to build a decent software collection.

Still, at a mere two hundred pounds (mere? – Ed), the PC Engine is an excellent, and genuinely tiny, way of bringing genuine arcade games into your home. *R-Type* on the PC Engine IS the arcade game with ultra-smooth scrolling and hordes of swirling aliens. If you look at the Engine as a cheap way of bringing an arcade machine into your home, it's great. And the planned American launch should dramatically increase the range of English language software and will hopefully lower the price a bit.



▲ A pyramid of games towering over Engine and CD-ROM in interface unit, together with joypads and Multi-Tap

game is ready to run. Unfortunately this format also makes software expensive – Micromedia sells the games at £29.95.

Adding it up

The unmodified Japanese PC Engine is compatible only with Japanese standard TVs and powerpacks, so obviously any imported machines have to modified. Micromedia offer two basic Engines. For £199.95 you can get an Engine with a SCART Euroconnector, complete with UK powerpack, joypad and full instructions. (SCART sockets can be found on most monitors and many newer TVs.) The second model is modified to allow it to be plugged straight into the antenna socket of any TV and costs £224.95. (You can also get a monitor/Engine bundle for £399.95).

Micromedia also offer a wide range of the various peripherals developed for the PC Engine since its launch. For £29.95 you can buy a Multi-tap 3 allowing more than one player to use the machine, three people can play with this using extra joypads (£14.95 each). A £39.95 Multi-tap 5 increases the number of players to five. At present

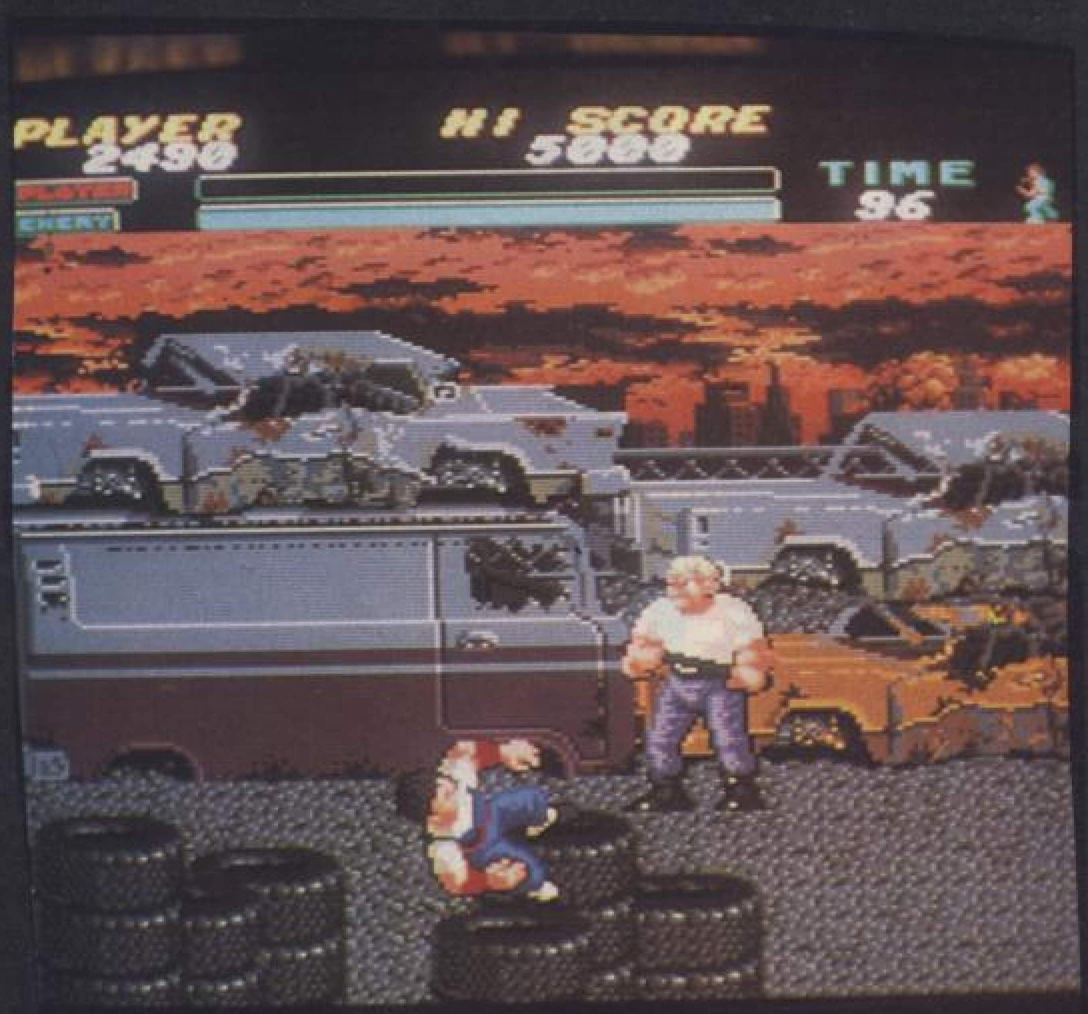


▲ Super-smooth scrolling, vertical and horizontal, in the classic *R-Type*

MARK When I first saw the PC Engine I thought someone had made a mistake and sent us the transformer from another console. It's so small, one could almost slip into a pocket! (In fact I tried a few times, but Dom wouldn't let it out of his sight.) But never judge anything by size – for £199.95 you get brilliant graphics and sonics. The arcade conversions (these include *R-Type*, *Vigilante* and *Galaga 88*) are very close to the originals, all they lack is the 'insert credit' message.

The original games aren't bad either; the racing game *Victory Run* and the beat-'em-up *Drunken Master* are really good. On the other hand one or two of the games, such as *Tennis*, are only about Sega graphics quality while adventures written purely in Japanese aren't much cop either. My favourite game, though, is *The Great Giana Sisters*-style arcade adventure *Chan And Chan*. You can choose one of this oriental comedy duo to represent you through some of the most flatulent adventures to be seen outside of *Viz*. Animals passing overhead freely relieve themselves, while some human characters are to be found in the bushes looking for a toilet. This is the funniest thing to come out of Japan since Clive James exposed *Endurance*.

The only slight moan I would voice is the control (or lack of), of the joypad, so I certainly hope the joystick comes out soon. Nevertheless, after spending most of a day playing it I only have three words to offer as a conclusion, I WANT ONE.



▲ Our *Vigilante* hero finding the going rather tiring

there's only *World Tennis* (1-4 players) and *World Baseball* (1-2 players) that makes use of this facility. Such players could also appreciate a PC Commander joypad which gives autofire on both fire buttons. And for players discomforted by controlling directions via the small 'joydisk' on the left side of the controller, a joystick should be available by the time you read this.

The most exciting peripheral, however, is the CD-ROM (compact disc, read only memory). This looks just like a normal portable CD player and indeed can be played like one (though there's no battery facility as yet). The CD-ROM costs £289.95, and on top of that you need an interface unit (£159.95) which houses both the CD-ROM and Engine in a single, very smart case. At the moment there's just two games available for it, one of which is a Japanese language adventure (not much use for us Brits), while the other is the coin-op conversion *Street Fighter* (free with the CD-ROM player). While obviously buying the CD-ROM just for that one game would be exceptionally extravagant, the potential for original games is astonishing. Besides accessing the CD-ROM for CD-quality speech, tunes and sound FX, the Engine can also read data from it – up to 600 megabytes per disc!

For the future there are plans to release an alphanumeric keyboard, a modem and floppy disk drive – NEC talk of the Engine not simply as a games machine, but rather the controller of a wide-range of household appliances. There's also plans to produce an four-inch square LCD colour display which, besides pleasing Mel Croucher, offers true portability – just imagine playing near-perfect coin-op conversions on the school bus!

DOM There is no doubt that of all the consoles available at the moment the PC Engine is by far the best. If you must buy a console within the next six months, I would definitely recommend the Engine without reservation – but there's load of others in the wings. There are going to be so many developments in the console market this year that, like Philips' Video 2000 system, the best may not necessarily flourish. That said, I don't want to put you off the machine, it's great.

What is so great about the PC Engine is that it never seems pushed. *R-Type* is absolutely fantastic to play, but the Engine looks like it could easily run it at double the speed with twice the number of aliens and have no hassle whatsoever – in fact *R-Type II* goes some way to proving this. Apart from the perfect translations of arcade games, the Engine also has a large array of 'fresh' original games, like *Chan And Chan*. Most of the games are tremendously playable and very addictive (*Galaga 88*), and when the American market takes off there should be some great product coming through.

The forthcoming year is going to be very exciting, I just can't wait.



▲ Losing his teeth in the city street section – the *Vigilante*

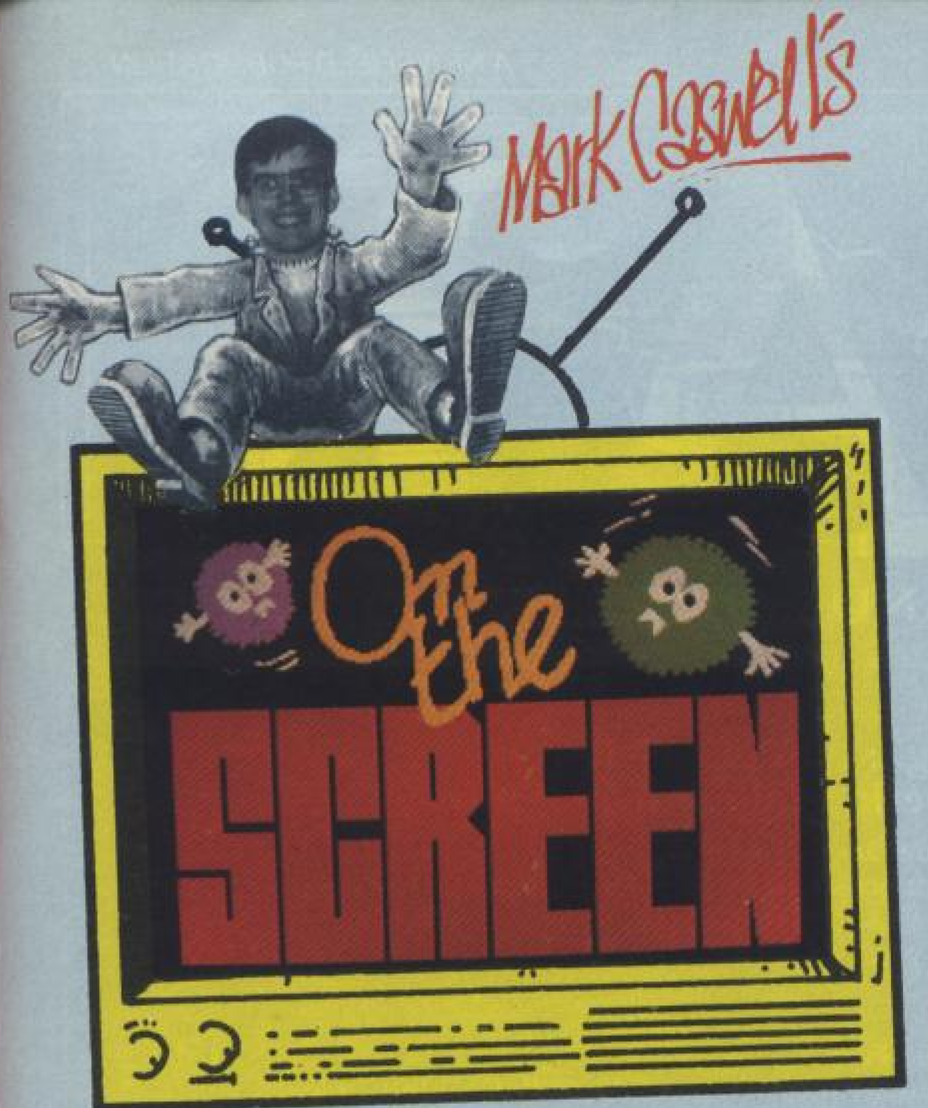
Battle of the consoles

If the PC Engine is currently the most powerful console in the UK, what of the immediate future? A great boost for the Engine's UK market will come in June when it is launched in America, generating a lot more English language games. But the wealth of that market means it will be far from the only super-console in the running to replace the 8-bit Nintendo. Hot on its heels should be the Sega Megadrive which first went on sale in Japan in November 1988 and sold 50,000 units in two days! Unlike the Engine it has a 16-bit, 68000 chip (the same as in the Amiga) which makes it potentially more powerful. So far though, there's only a couple of games available for it and a UK September launch date seems optimistic given that it's yet to be released in the USA.

Also bidding for the US market is a rumoured Epyx console, and Nintendo's 16-bit update of their current console. Nintendo have the muscle to produce a really good machine with lots of software, but they've traditionally spent little time on the UK market. Then there's rumours that both Atari and Commodore plan console versions of their 16-bit computers. The £400 Amiga already challenges the Engine for performance with a superior sound chip and higher resolution graphics. Unfortunately the Amiga uses a lot of expensive chips and so far only rarely do its games come close to using its full capabilities. Probably the most interesting competition, however, is provided by the Konix Multi-System due to appear in August/September. This is covered in some detail on page 11, and appears to have a superior specification, but its unique continual disk access system has yet to be proved.

For the moment, however, the PC Engine is clearly the business and has a big headstart on its rivals. And the one thing that's certain is that 1989 is going to be one of the most exciting years computer gaming has seen for a long time, if not ever.

For more information on the NEC PC Engine, contact: *Micro Media, The Moor Hall, Clee Downton, Shropshire SY8 3EG.* ☎ 0584 75604





▲ **Do you believe in the little folk?** Luis Pedro C Bacharel **from Portugal obviously does, he has sent in this picture entitled Elf. Actually this little chap reminds me more of Robin Hood. Oh, well.**



▲ **This fella wouldn't look far out of place in the new UbiSoft game *Skateball*, but in fact it's a binary version of Rodney Matthew's artwork for No Mean City, an album by another heavy metal band – Nazareth. And to be honest I quite like some heavy metal, especially Van Halen and David Lee Roth. Maybe** Matthew Ablott **of South Humberside can do a similarly impressive rendering of one of their albums.**

Spring is just around the corner, and all at CRASH Towers are busy with the ritual cleaning up that occurs around now . . . and boy, does this place need it! We lost Phil the other day, and only found him when a chair covered with a dust-sheet moved!

All is pandemonium in the CRASH office, but what's new I hear you say, not a lot really. There's always a hooligan element in here (ie, Nick and Phil). This month we are visited by one of the end-of-level guardians from *R-Type*, an elf and even some heavy metal-inspired pix.



► **No, it isn't a picture of me first thing in the morning, in fact it's a very nice portrait of Eddie, the 'mascot' of Iron Maiden. I have never been very fond of heavy metal, but it would appear that my old buddy** Chris Peil **from Bolton is. Contributions to his hearing-aid appeal fund can be made though the normal channels . . .**



◄ **Back in Issue 59 *R-Type* was awarded a well-deserved CRASH Smash and the game's still an office favourite – even with Nick's pokes it's really hard. Similarly enamoured of this coin-op conversion is** Miss S Mullington **from Stoke-On-Trent who's sent in her rendering of the confrontation between the R-9 ship and Level One's *Alien*-inspired mega-monster. It's pretty darn good and what's more it's the first female entry I've received for OTS, lots more to follow I'm sure.**

Well, as another OTS draws to a close, I can tell you the office is looking a little tidier, if you don't count either Stuart's or Phil's desks. Nick has even removed all the Smash Hits stickers which had been plastered all over his word processor. As for the Ed, he's making a racket hammering a nail into the wall for his noticeboard. It fell down last week and almost killed him – well, I mean, using Blu-Tack to hold it up, huh!

If you think that you can do better than this month's bunch of budding artists, don't just sit there muttering about it, put pixel onto computer and design a screen worthy of the OTS hall of fame. Do the usual stuff (put work onto tape, place in envelope, seal and post envelope etc), and you may receive £40 worth of software for the best of the bunch, or even the £10 runner-up prize. As usual send all entries to Mark 'Robin Candy' Caswell, On The Screen, CRASH, PO Box 10, LUDLOW, Shropshire SY8 1DB.

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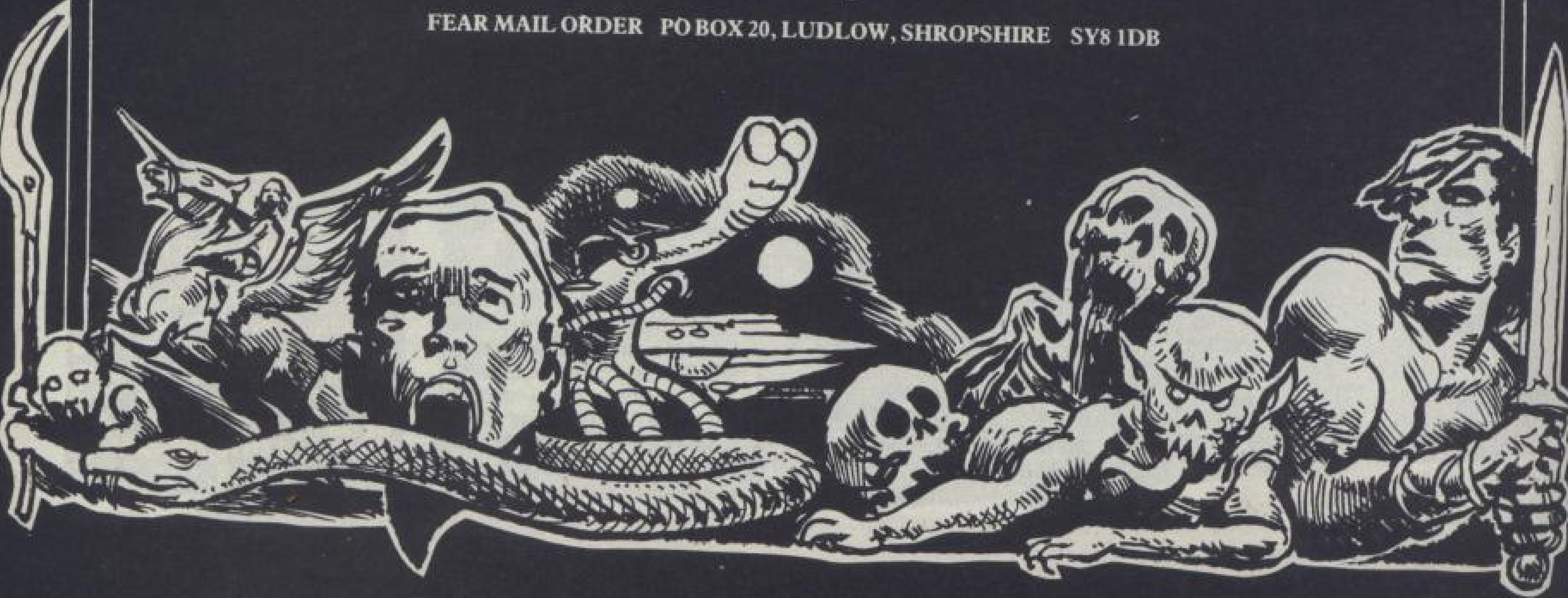
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TECH NICHE Tips



+3 KILLER

Switch to the Plus D and save £105?

After last month's unveiling of Miles Gordon Technology's alternative Spectrum – SAM – IAN CULL now reviews MGT's alternative to the +3, the Plus D disk drive add-on. Deepening Amstrad's woes further Ian also disparages the +2A, while updating his *DICE* review and looking over yet more techie mags.

DUE TO Amstrad's predictable refusal to offer hardware for Spectrum owners wishing to upgrade to +3 standards, the only option might seem buying a completely new computer. In fact, this is far from the case thanks to **Miles Gordon Technology**. Their solution to the problem is the Plus D Interface and 780K 3.5 inch disk drive for £139.95 in kit form, (available from MGT, **Lakeside, Phoenix Way, Swansea Enterprise Park, Swansea, SA7 9EH**).

Comparing a 48K or 128K Spectrum with Plus D fitted, to the official disk machine, the +3, is an interesting exercise. The Plus D is a flat, but long, interface, that when fitted to a Spectrum sticks out enough to almost double its length. A cable connects it to the metal-cased disk drive, which has a separate power supply (another cable). There is a built-in parallel printer interface, but no serial ports. This obviously means a lot more desk space is taken up.

Another slight problem is that your Spectrum isn't designed to access the disk drive. When powered up the Plus D interface has only minimal internal software – enough to 'boot' a disk, which loads in the full program. However, a configuration program, supplied on tape, allows the specifics of your particular

> **'Loading a 48K snapshot takes about 7 seconds'**

disk drive set-up to be programmed into a system file, which is then stored on disk for future booting – the tape will probably never be needed again. Booting takes only about 2.5 seconds. While the +3 obviously does not need this, the MGT drive offers much more storage space, 780K in all, or four times as much as can be held on a +3 disk without manually flipping it over. The drive is also very fast, the SAVE of 16K took 4.6 seconds, the LOAD just 2.2 seconds. Formatting, however, takes a very slow 110 seconds (18 for the +3, but you need to do it four times to get the same amount of disk storage

> **'It would be possible to write 390K programs'**

space).

The Plus D can also emulate the Microdrive syntax, making it reasonably compatible with Spectrum business software (the +3 emulates tape loading/saving, but little else), but also has a simpler syntax (still not as easy to type as the +3 though). Another +D advantage is a built-in 'magic button' (saving the cost of a *Multiface 3*) which allows screen dumps, and 48K or 128K snapshots (or copies of programs) to be taken. Also on the plus side is that true disk data files can be created – it is thus possible to open streams to files, and PRINT to, or INPUT from, the file via the stream. It would be possible to write programs handling 390K or more of data in this way!

Snapshots cannot be loaded until the disk has been booted, so loading a 48K snapshot (*Advanced Pinball Simulator*) takes about seven seconds, and five key presses (using the LOAD p5 shortcut). The +3, using *Multiface 3*, takes 19 seconds (and ten key presses) to load the same game – however, there is a little extra 128K-specific code to be loaded. The one bonus is that *Multiface* packs the games on disk, allowing more to be fitted on the disk (e.g. 60K for a 128K game on the +3, as against

> **'The +3 is quite incompatible with other Spectrums'**

128K on the Plus D). But then, the Plus D has more space available on the disk.

You should also remember that the +3 is quite incompatible with older Spectrums (except the +2A), and much hardware and some software will not run on it. Fitting a Plus D to your old Spectrum will save you £105 (+3 and Multiface 3 = £245), and run everything you already own (NB: the Plus D is NOT compatible with my Alphacom printer or Multiface 1, though).

T**O MAKE** best use of the **Plus D**, additional hacker programs are needed since it has few functions apart from the 'snapshot' one. ***Genie***, for all *Multifaces* except the +3, has for some time allowed hackers to stop a game or other program in mid-flight, call up a disassembler/editor, then continue the stopped program as if nothing had happened. Now, two programs for the Plus D allow similar tasks to be carried out. The 'official' ***Pick-Poke-It*** (*PPI*) from **MGT** themselves and ***Plus D Hacker*** (*PDH*) from **INDUG, 34 Bourton Road, Gloucester GL4 0LE**. *PPI* costs £14.95, against *PDH* which costs just £3.95!

Both programs are supplied on tape, so that they can be configured onto any Plus D set up. In both cases, a new Plus D system file is created on disk, which will auto-initialise the hack-program whenever the disk is booted. Other necessary files take 15K of disk space for *PPI* and 20.5K for *PDH*.



Genie fits totally into the *Multiface* RAM, so is instantly available when the magic button is pressed. Both *PPI* and *PDH*, however, store their code on disk, and take some time to appear when the button is pressed – *PPI* takes 6 seconds, *PDH* takes 7.5 seconds. However, *PDH* has a second mode, in which the screen is not saved (useful in some cases) which appears almost instantly!

Once loaded, both programs offer similar facilities (though *PDH* offers some unusual additional routines), but the routines are also called in from disk as required (eg 2 seconds to call up the disassembler) – *PPI* is quicker here, but *PDH* is smart enough to not reload the routine if you have just used it. One problem with both programs is that some of the Spectrum RAM is taken up with the hack-program itself (just the screen on *PDH*, but all memory up to 23755 on *PPI*). *PDH* does not deal with this, indeed it is possible to disassemble/edit *PDH* itself (or crash it, if you're not careful). *PPI*, however, allows the 'missing' memory to be loaded into the 48K section, and examined there – this is detailed under the 128K bank functions as an appendix, so 48K users may miss it!

'*PDH* offers some unusual additional routines'

Both of the programs have a poor keyboard interface; there is a tendency for double registering of keys, etc. This is particularly annoying in *PDH*, since there is no delete function. You have to let the selected function begin, then abort it (very dangerous if the selected function was a fill memory, or similar).

PPI offers, once the button has been pressed, the normal snapshot functions, as well as a disassembler; memory editor; search routine; access to Z80 registers; (128K) bank switch and search; block find and fill, and graphics search. Output can be sent to the printer with both.

'Both programs have a poor keyboard interface'

Of the two packages, *PPI* is far easier to use. When disassembling or displaying memory, one page at a time is given, then the menu can be recalled, the same function restarted, or the following page displayed. *PDH* simply disassembles/displays until ENTER is pressed (to pause the display), SPACE (which restarts) or M (to recall the main menu). *PDH* only uses the bottom third of the screen, whereas *PPI* uses the whole screen. POKEing is also simpler with *PPI*, allowing entry of message strings as well as decimal/hex numbers – *PDH* has a POKE facility within a general Z80 register page, and only accepts decimal numbers.

However, *PDH* offers additional facilities to *PPI* – in particular, semi-automated infinite life POKE searches (though nowhere near as sophisticated as the ***Multiface Lifeguard*** program), and a graphics search mode. This is quite intriguing, as it allows memory to be scrolled around onscreen in many ways, giving a reasonable chance of finding where a games graphics are held in memory. Another *PDH* bonus is an additional program that can be loaded into the Plus D over the top of the hack-program (but taking no main Spectrum memory), which gives the Spectrum some graphics drawing functions. For example, RUN*1 (followed by 7 arguments!) allows an area of memory to be defined as a graphic; RUN*d will delete lines of BASIC etc. One problem is that these routines use information from the hack-program, which cannot be run at the same time.

'*PDH* has semi-automated infinite life POKE searches'

In summary, both programs do their job reasonably well. *PPI* is a well written program, with excellent documentation – but it is very expensive. *PDH* is less 'professional', but offers a number of unusual additional functions, and is *very* good value. Documentation for *PDH* is not too good (and there is a warning of possible crashes on 128K Spectrums). The average Spectrum user would be quite happy with *Plus D Hacker*, but serious game hackers may wish to pay the additional money for *Pick-Poke-It*, to get a more reliable product.

+2A BUGS!

A NEW AND interesting POKE has come to my attention, from **Kenny Anderson** of Dunfermline. Type POKE 23398,4 then FORMAT 'A:' – this will result in a +2A error message!

The +2As are on sale now – they are in Sinclair black (rather than the awful grey), and have an 'M:' RAMDISK to which you can

+3 CORNER

AFTER REVIEWING Kobrahsoft's back-up program *DB1* in Issue 60 I promised a quick update on *DICE* (now Version 2) also from Kobrahsoft (**Pleasant View, Hulme Lane, Hulme Near Longton, Stoke-on-Trent, Staffs ST3 5BH**). Refer back to Issue 57 for the full review.

The main menu has now lost the COPY command (which has been moved to within the FILES menu, so that all or just selected files can be copied). However, two new commands have appeared – INIT and ANALYSE. The INIT command allows a disk to be formatted to +3, system or data format (all three formats are now fully supported by *DICE*) – the Data format gives an extra 5K per disk, and is a fast format (DOS ROM saved in 7.6 seconds and loaded in 5.2).

The ANALYSE command goes some way towards dealing with commercially protected non-standard disks. You can examine, and even modify (at your own risk), disks that normal +3 disk routines cannot read. I would not recommend that you do this on an original disk however – use Kobrahsoft's *DB1* package first to make a backup!

DICE also now handles CP/M format disks – including decoding disk volume name details, file passwords and user numbers, and date and time stamps. The sector display now has an additional mode, in which all 512 bytes are displayed at once, in ASCII only – this is very useful when examining/recovering text-only files (or looking through adventure programs, etc).

Finally, there is a new LOG function within the disk menu. This allows individual sectors to be logged into a list, the contents of which can then be written to a new disk as a complete file. This can, with care, allow a file to be recovered from a corrupted disk EVEN if the directory has been destroyed! It is only really useful for text files, since you must be able to recognise, in order, the parts of the file.

DICE is now 13500 bytes long, leaving 10K free for BASIC programs. Its price is still £12.95, and upgrades from Version 1 cost £5.96.

SAVE/LOAD all files, unlike older +2's. They do, however, have all the bugs and expansion port incompatibilities of the +3 – in particular, the MGT *Plus D* will not work without an extra interface, costing £7.95. I suggest that potential 128K purchasers hunt down the grey +2 – there is little to recommend in a +3 without disk drive!

While on the subject of +3 bugs, Kieran Wood has sent in two more curiosities. When the 'scroll?' message appears, try pressing the EXTEND MODE key, then ENTER. Kieran also warns that entering very long lines (of the order of one screenful) causes unpredictable corruption of the entered line, and/or the complete program – so be careful! There is, of course, no warning issued by the Spectrum of when this will occur.

By the way, the cursor left bug (printing a cursor left code when the screen is already at top left) will corrupt ALL Spectrums, not just the +3!

TECH MAGS

FIRST REVIEWED in Issue 58, I'm glad to see that the fifth issue of *Spectrum Programmer* has responded to some of the comments made in CRASH. Kieran Wood **has now made the tape magazine bi-monthly, and increased the price to £1.50. However, he does appear to have some assistance now . . .**

The latest issue offers more to the beginner, including an abbreviated course on binary and hexadecimal, including doing calculations in binary – well worth understanding, as that is how your Spectrum does it. There is also a list of Spectrum bugs (see +3 section), and a turbo loader program from Mr Goodman, which CRASH Tech Tape owners will find of little use.

Now on to another disk-based magazine, *OUTLET* from Chezron Software, 605 Loughborough Rd, Birstall, Leicester LE4 4NJ. **They have been a little upset about not being reviewed by CRASH – so I hope this pleases them . . .**

***OUTLET* is a very well-presented magazine for all 48K/128K Spectrum owners. It is available on Opus or Disciple/Plus D disk, on two Microdrive cartridges, or on tape. The cost is £2 per issue, if you supply the disk/Microdrive media, or £3.50/£5.00 on supplied disk/Microdrive. The cassette version is £2.75.**

OUTLET contains a wide variety of generally excellent content; including readers letter, hints/tips, medium length utility programs, mini-games (even the occasional adventure), reviews of commercial non-game software and hardware, and a monthly round-up of what the rival 'paper' magazines are printing. There are also adverts and a detailed section for less experienced Spectrum users.

In the few issues sent for review I found many gems – a 42/51/64 column screen print routine (Issue 7), many new character fonts, a simple disassembler (Issue 13), details of connecting Microdrives from ICL's One-Per-Desk to a Spectrum's Interface One (Issue 14). There was also a Microdrive exerciser program (*Seal Rescue*, in Issue 10) which finds and locks out suspect sectors on a Microdrive – this program takes ages to run, but is almost bound to discover any faults!

There is also a full back issue service from Chezron (in which I noticed a full assembler, *Jacksoft*, in Issue 10). Finally, a Fish Tank Simulation (*The Amazing Arnold* in Issue 10) would have kept me amused for hours, if it didn't keep crashing!

Currently, Issue 15 offers a proportional text print routine, a program to print aligned decimal numbers, a shopping list maker, an in-depth discussion of interrupts on the Spectrum, and *Craldon's Creek* (an adventure).

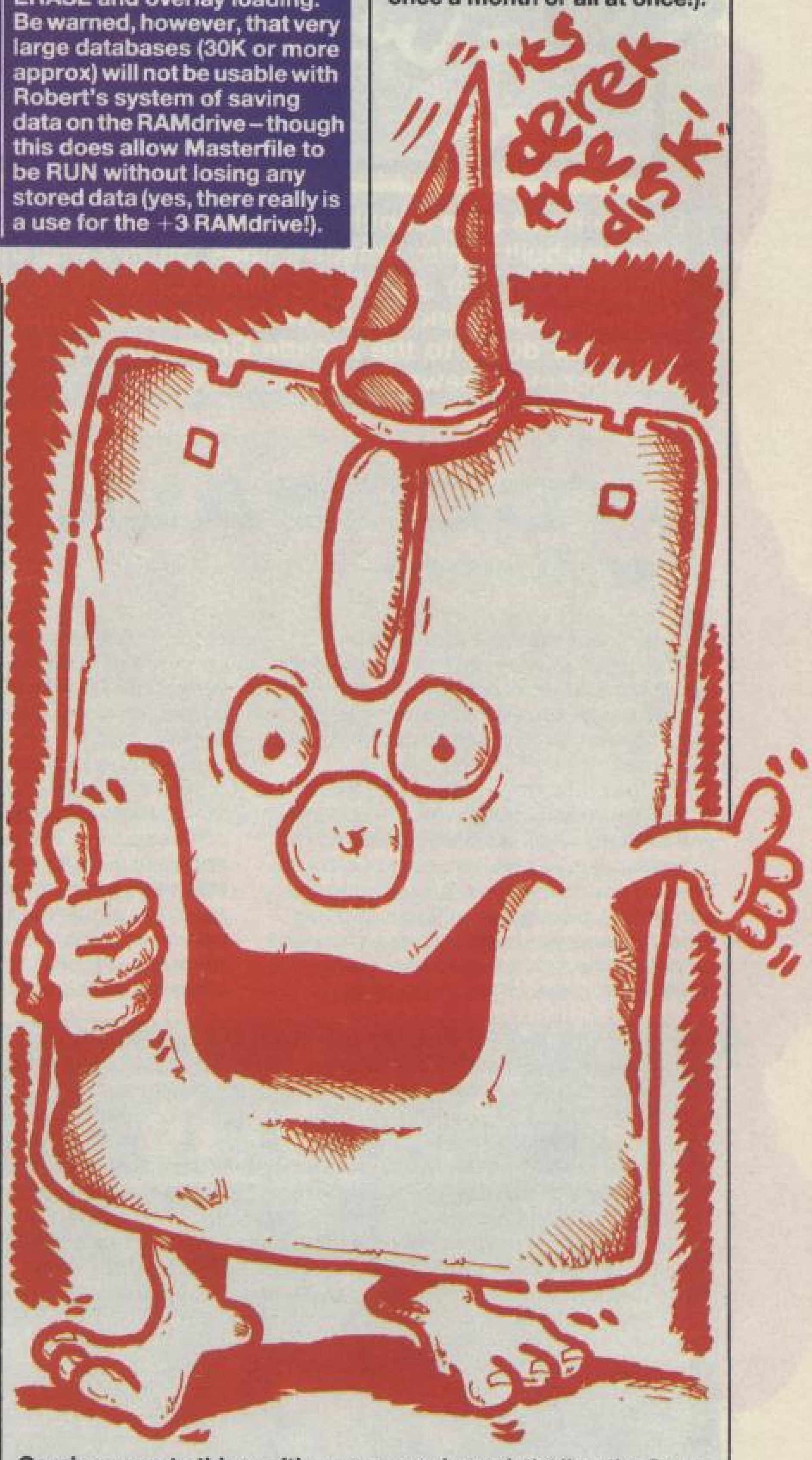
One minor niggle – the Microdrive version comes on two cartridges, and you are always prompted for cartridge B, even if it is the one that was just used and so is still in the drive!

***OUTLET* is a good value disk-based magazine, well established and with a reasonable readership (150 or so at present, apparently). Serious users would do well to consider a discounted 6 or 12 month subscription (at £11 or £21, if you supply the media – once a month or all at once!).**

+3 *MASTERFILE*

THOSE OF you, like me, using an old 48K/Microdrive version of *Masterfile*, may be interested in a program from Robert Diskson of 12 Coppelia Road, Blackheath, London SE3 9DB. **Send him a disk and £2.99 and you will receive a program to transfer *Masterfile* (including data and report files) from tape to +3 disk. Users of *Masterfile* on Microdrive will first need to save the program and data files to tape.**

Additional facilities are added via the User BASIC function, which calls up a new menu, including CATaloging, file ERASE and overlay loading. Be warned, however, that very large databases (30K or more approx) will not be usable with Robert's system of saving data on the RAMdrive – though this does allow Masterfile to be RUN without losing any stored data (yes, there really is a use for the +3 RAMdrive!).



Coming soon to this exciting venue we have *Artist II* **on the Spectrum +3 and Ergo System's** Clive Drive. **Then there's Cardex, the company that brought desktop publishing to the Spectrum (via *Word Master*, *Headliner* and *Typeliner*, see Issue 56). They've changed their name to** PCG **(sounds familiar) and now reside at** 61 School Street, Barrow-in-Furness, Cumbria LA14 1EW. **To celebrate, they've sent me their latest versions, including one for the Spectrum +3, expect detailed reviews soon.**

As usual, the letters of praise – as well as pleas for expert advice and hints/information – should be sent to Ian Cull, Tech Niche, CRASH, PO Box 10, LUDLOW, Shropshire SY8 1DB.

ARCADES

Due to more than popular demand MARK CASWELL, the man who was built to play arcade games, returns with the latest news and views on four arcade machines currently scoring high with the punters in Manchester. We've just despatched the portable playtester down to the Arcade Convention in London, so stay tuned for more news on that next month . . .

CYBERBALL
Atari Games

Check out the new Atari offering entitled *Cyberball*. The year is 2022, the sport is American Football, and human players have been replaced by giant robots, each one five times the size of a man.

The first thing that strikes you about *Cyberball* is the casing, which houses not one but two separate screens! Up to four players can take part, two per screen and team. If you start alone, just playing the computer, friends can still join in at any time. As soon as a team is chosen for each side then the mechanized monsters thunder onto the pitch, many with caterpillar tracks and looking like macho versions of Number Five in *Short Circuit*. Knowledge of American Football is useful, but things are made pretty obvious in play.

Gameplay begins when a pillar deposits a glowing ball at the fifty-yard line, this then zooms into the hands of the team on offensive play. The game pauses for a few seconds as the player in charge of the offensive team chooses between four plays (or plans) displayed in diagrams onscreen. (There are one hundred in memory, but only those onscreen can be chosen.) At the same time the opposing player(s) must choose their defensive play. Obviously if one team were to know the opposing team's play they'd have a major advantage, so the two screens are angled to help prevent this.

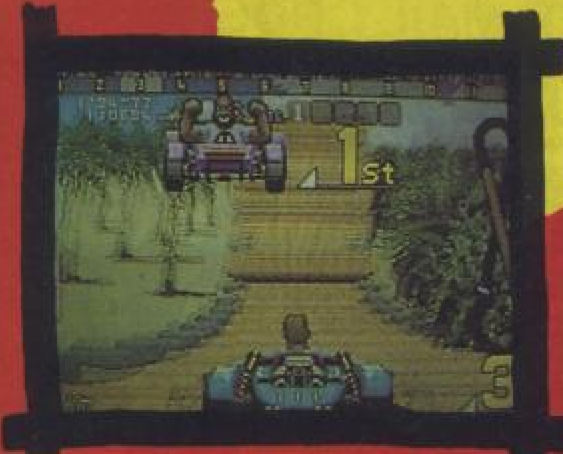


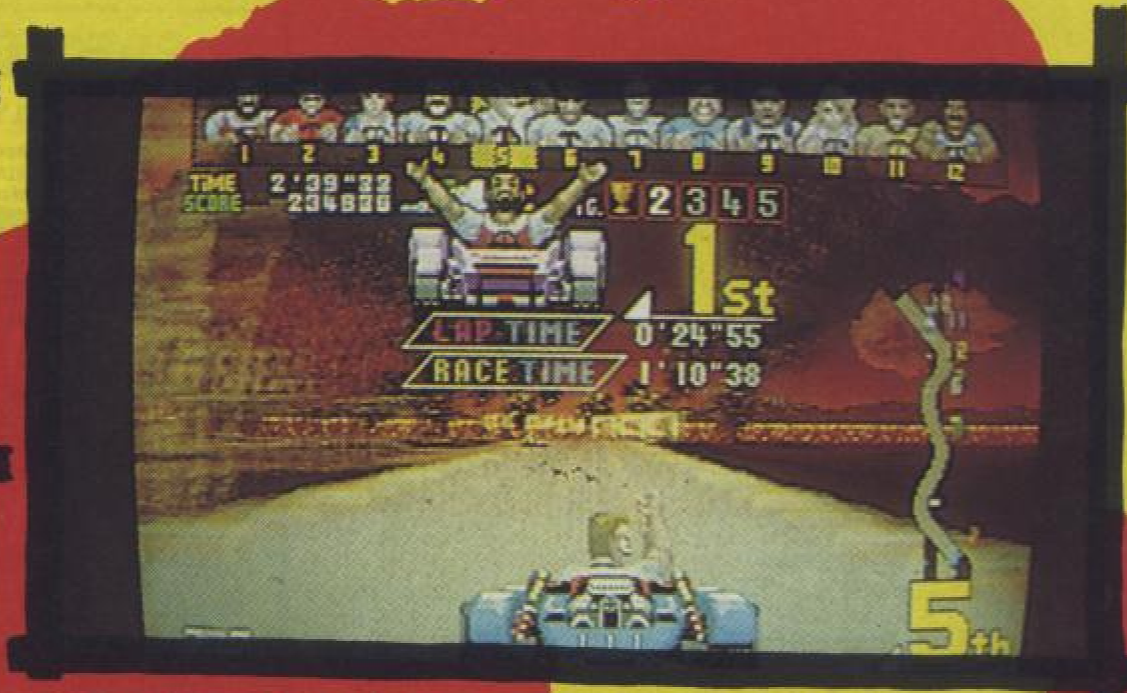
Once the plays have been decided, the diagram screens vanish to display your team on the pitch. The quarterback on the offensive team then calls out the play and the two teams move into formation. The ball is then thrown to the quarterback who must throw the ball to a receiver (one of his team robots that has moved deep into the other team's half). The team's human player must use his joystick to throw the ball to the position where the receiver will be – according to the chosen play. To avoid the player having to remember this position it is marked by a white cursor. If the receiver gets there and collects the ball, you get control of the receiver who must run forward as far as possible. If one player is on the offensive side his joystick then switches to control over the receiver, if two are playing one player is already in charge of the receiver so the other player gets control of another robot to run 'interference', stopping defensive robots tackling the receiver. During this time the defensive player must move the robot he has control over into a steel-crunching tackle with the receiver.

Sound, as with most Atari games is good, with nice jingles and the gruff metallic voice of the quarterback (8-16-24 hup, hup, hup etc). Whether you like American Football or not, *Cyberball* is a tough and very challenging game which I recommend highly.

POWER DRIFT
Sega

Power Drift is the latest racing game to appear from the *Out Run/ Afterburner/Thunder Blade* people – Sega. (In fact, the producers of Speccy *Afterburner*, Activision, have chosen *Power Drift* as their big game for next Christmas.) It follows the time-honoured tradition of zipping around a track in a souped-up vehicle, risking life and limb on





some very tight hairpin bends (help! where's the brake pedal?), and all against the merciless ticking of a stopwatch. There are five courses to choose from and each has five stages (lettered A-E); included among the 25 different stages are city scapes, deserts and plenty of logs.

You'd naturally expect a fast car here, another Ferrari perhaps, but no, in this game you get a dune buggy. Actually this is pretty useful because your competitors are some of the world's most reckless drivers, zooming past a great speed – so surviving collisions is vital.

The way the road dips and dives around is suggestive of *Out Run*, and the effect is truly exhilarating when experienced in the hydraulic version (or awful if you've just eaten lunch). Finish in third position or better and you're placed on the starting line for the next race, fail and it's game over.

Power Drift is a very competent game and great fun to play, especially in the panicky moments when you're roaring toward a tight 90° bend and you can't find the brake pedal. I actually prefer Taito's *Continental Circuit*, but this ain't half bad either.

SHADOW WARRIOR
Tecmo



Tecmo is one of the second rank of arcade manufacturers and I haven't played many games by them. Judging them by this, their obscurity isn't due to them taking risks developing hugely-innovative games.

The plot sees balaclava-wearing oriental hitmen on holiday in the USA. Sadly, gawping at the Empire State Building and touring the United Nations building isn't enough to keep them happy and they're soon fighting each other on New York City's notoriously bumpy roads. Our hero ninjas appear, not from a puff of smoke, but out of a mini-whirlwind. The streets are strangely silent as you start off on your biffing and thumping quest, but you can bet your last yen that it won't stay that way for long.

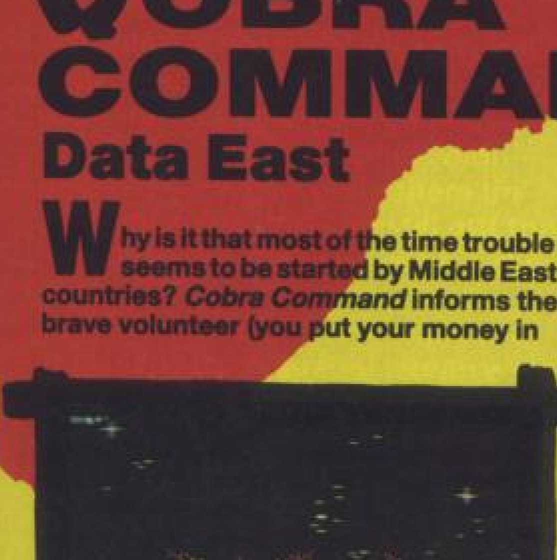
And sure enough, that Arnie Schwarzenegger-lookalike with the Friday The 13th frightmask isn't on his way to shake your hand, and neither is his Neanderthal friend. What do you mean, what should you do? Fight!! A quick press of the action button soon has our hero kicking and punching his way through, producing a growing heap of unconscious baddies. In any sticky situations the jump button gets you sailing through the air like a turbocharged Bruce Lee. But if you press jump when standing below a sign, our athletic friend with leap up, grab it and start kicking enemies in true swashbuckling style.

Bare fists and feet aren't all you have to defend yourself with, though. As you battle your way through the baddie-filled levels the occasional weapon will appear, but these must be grabbed quickly because they soon disappear. Baseball bats, chains and swords all add to your chances of getting out of this situation in one piece, and if I was you I'd take any and all the help I could find.

Graphically, *Shadow Warrior* is very much like *Dragon Ninja*. Gameplay is also very similar, watch out for the opposition on later levels because they come at you thick and fast (a friend's help is strongly advised here). As they say in the TV adverts, it's good . . . but not that good.

COBRA COMMAND
Data East

Why is it that most of the time trouble seems to be started by Middle East countries? *Cobra Command* informs the brave volunteer (you put your money in the slot didn't you?) that an evil Middle East country called Veraq has developed a hush-hush super-weapon. To stop them using it you climb in your hush-hush super-weapon, a chopper armed with unlimited bullets and missiles. Guarding the Veraqian super-weapon are anti-aircraft guns, helicopters and jets. And at the end of each level there's a super-baddie. There's quite a way to go to reach the super-weapon and if you succeed the US Government would like to speak to you about somewhere called Libya.



Cobra Command has some bold, well-drawn graphics but the gameplay is sadly lacking and I quickly grew bored. In short, worth a few ten pees to try, but don't expect to be drawn back too often.

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TRAVEL THE AGES

AND WIN, WIN, WIN A SATELLITE DISH AND TUNER!!

RENEGADE 3 THE FINAL CHAPTER

follows in the beat-'em-up footsteps of its mega-selling predecessors, but adds a time-travelling scenario and several tons of humour from a different programming team. The full story is in Previews, but needless to say with such a potentially blockbusting game due out Ocean were eager to run a knockout (sorry) competition.

The first I knew of this comp was when a large Sly Stallone lookalike in combat rags burst into my broom cupboard one night. Being a brave sort of chap I instantly dived under the bedcovers.

I peered out after about five minutes but he was still standing there, fingering the trigger of his submachine gun with what is known in the shouting-and-killing-trade as a sneer on his face. Wordlessly he reached into a pocket and pulled out a piece of paper, this he handed to me and walked out. Of course, the CRASH lads didn't believe me when I told them the next morning, but I've still got the dents on my door where he kicked it in.

When I finally read the piece of paper I discovered that Ocean were responsible for the walking mountain, promoting *Renegade 3 - The Final Chapter*. Being a kind, generous (and chicken-hearted) fellow I followed the instructions on the letter to the paper (or something like that), and am now proud to present the *Renegade 3 - The Final Chapter* competition (*** cue trumpet fanfare***).

The amazing first prize is a satellite dish and tuner – so you can find out what all the hype is about, and hopefully see *RoboCop* on Astra's Sky network before they make it subscriber-only. Second prize, for the next ten names out of the by now rather moth-eaten old hat, will be copies of *Renegade 3 - The Final Chapter*, *Operation Wolf*, and *Rambo III* (all programmed by Andrew Deakin and Ivor Horn).

How to win a prize: simply spot the FIVE differences between the two pictures below. Cut out the Picture B and send it, with your name and address, to . . . **I WANT A HI-TECH WOK COMP, CRASH, PO Box 10, LUDLOW, Shropshire SY8 1DB.** And send those entries in before April 3 or Mr Death Wish himself may pay you a visit.

CRASH COMPETITION

PICTURE A



PICTURE B



Reviews

DARK FUSION

● *Exolon? R-Type? Zynaps? Nah, it's not any of them!*

Producer **Gremlin Graphics**
Plasma power **£7.99 cass**
£12.99 disk
Authors **Jobbee, Berni and Benn**

If you think GCSEs are a pain, spare a thought for the poor soldiers who have to pass the stringent three-phase test of the Corps of Guardian Readers . . . er, I mean Warriors. This test is one of the hardest in the known universe, and Gremlin want you to *pay* for privilege of suffering it.

To start with, you bravely venture on foot into the horizontally-scrolling Combat Zone. As in *R-Type* your gun has a power meter – hold fire down to produce a giant plasma bolt. When aliens are destroyed they drop globes which can be collected for a points, add-on weapons or extra jump power.

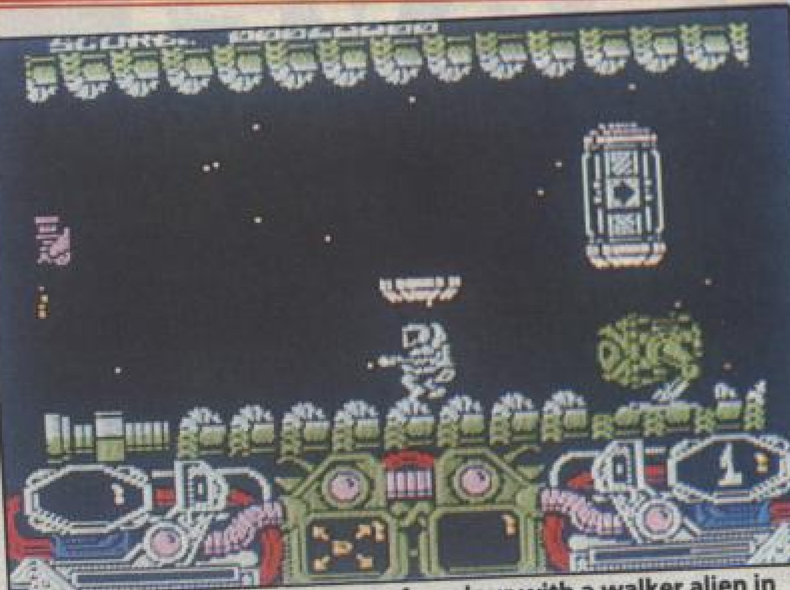
Situated in the Combat Zone are three flashing Fusion Pods. Enter one of the first two and the player is changed into a spaceship, transferred to the single-screen Alien Zone. Here, a huge alien (different for each level) attacks you and must be destroyed to return to the Combat Zone.

When both large aliens have been eliminated (the easy bit!), you may enter the third pod and the Flight Zone. This is a horizontally-scrolling landscape, infested with small aliens. The fusion pod at the zone's end takes you to the Combat Zone of the next ten levels.

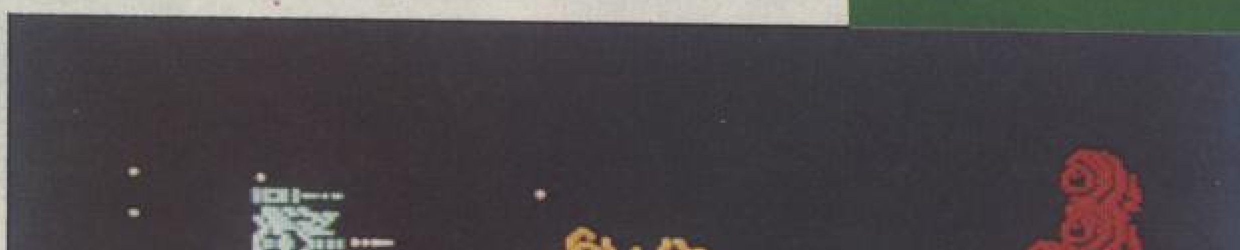
Despite similarities to the brilliant *R-Type*, *Dark Fusion* incorporates a more varied mixture of game styles. All the levels are quite colourful and without much clash. The aliens are well drawn and animated, though not as impressive as those in *R-Type*. To deal with them there's a variety of powerful weapons to be collected, adding an interesting strategic element. Ingame sound effects are limited, but there's a good intro tune.

Dark Fusion is a fine shoot-'em-up, with varied gameplay to live up to its slick presentation. Its appeal is also likely to last, due to just the right level of difficulty – challenging, but not (quite) impossible.

PHIL 83%



▲ Discretion is the better part of a valour with a walker alien in pursuit



▲ The Alien Zone with the Mega-Alien launching an indestructible worm

READY FUSION

- The best weapon is the dual rocket.
- In the Alien Zone, store up plasma power when you can't hit the alien.
- In the second level's Alien Zone stay at the left-hand side of the screen and you should easily avoid the fireballs.
- To kill large end-of-level monsters, walk to the left, turn round and fire a large plasma bolt. Repeat this sequence until the monster is destroyed.

Presentation is slick, the graphics and animation are good, while sound is just adequate. Some of the sprites in the combat zones are really impressive, but require a lot of bashing – and that's the main problem, gameplay is just too difficult. As in *R-Type* knowing the attack waves of the aliens is vital, but here you have to know them to such precision the fun goes out of the game. Nevertheless, it's better than *Techno Cop*.

NICK 80%

MARK This is a very playable shoot-'em-up which takes elements from several sources to produce an interesting, well-presented game. Unfortunately, the variety of all the different levels is occasionally appreciated due to the ease with which games are cut too short (ie, you die very quickly! – Ed). I disagree with Phil on this game, the gameplay is frustratingly hard and practice doesn't help that much. For well 'ard gamesplayers only.

77%

THE ESSENTIALS

Joysticks: Cursor, Kempston, Sinclair
Graphics: generally colourful and all well-drawn
Sound: a decent 128K title tune, but only simple ingame blasting effects
Options: definable keys
General rating: a hard, but interesting blend of game-styles which should please gamesplayers who eat three Shredded Wheat

Presentation	83%
Graphics	79%
Sound	73%
Playability	82%
Addictive qualities	80%

OVERALL 80%

Producer **Infogrames**
Vital fluids **£9.95 cass**
£14.95 disk
Author **Ere Informatique**

CAPTAIN BLØOD

The world is under siege from aliens, they linger everywhere, constantly attacking humans from their bases in Spectrums, arcade machines and even PC Engines. But programmer Bob Morlock has decided to stop them. He's programmed Captain Blood, a hero based on himself, together with a starship.

But when Morlock runs this program he is transformed into Blood, and soon under attack from Space Invaders. A quick hyperspace seems in order, but the drive unit malfunctions, creating thirty Blood clones, all with a portion of his vital fluids! So before taking on the aliens, Blood must first find all his clones. When the game starts 25 have been found and absorbed.

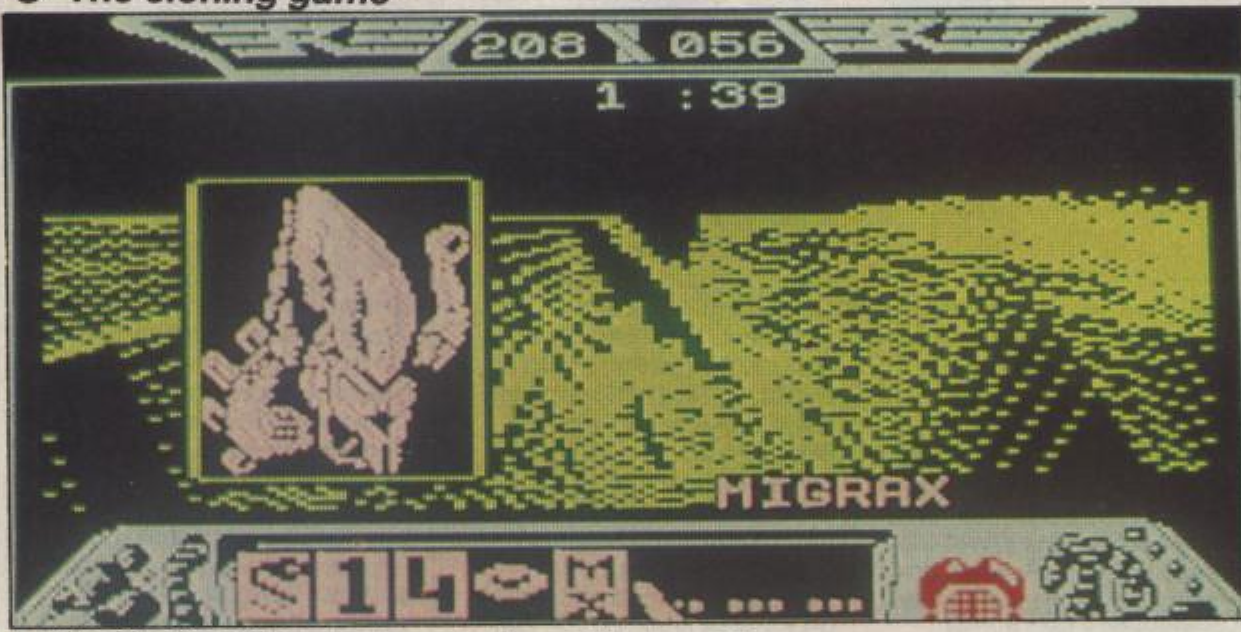
When you take over Morlock's quest the first thing you notice is the excellent presentation, clearly inspired by the movie *Alien*. Operating this biomechanic display is done by using Blood's hand to click on icons. Options include looking at the planet's surface (to detect missiles), blowing the planet up, hyperdriving to another planet, saving the game or launching an Oorxx biomissile. In the latter case the player is given joystick control of the missile as it zooms across a wireframe landscape towards a canyon. This is the only arcade section in the game and is impressive.

At the end of the canyon, an animated picture of the alien appears together with a scrolling strip of icons. When the alien talks icons appear which, by pointing at them, are translated into words. You can reply by selecting icons at the base of the screen. There is always an alien on the first planet, but with tens of thousands of planets and only a handful of aliens, it's vital you convince the first alien to give you the coordinates of other aliens. The basic idea is that you warp around the galaxy, talking aliens into giving you the locations of the clones. Some aliens will ask you to do favours for them, like destroying other planets, or taking them somewhere. And with a 45-hour time limit there's lots to do.

While arcade fans will enjoy the planet-landing sequence, the icon communication system is likely to be frustrating. Presentation is marvellous and given more time to get into the game I feel I could become really hooked. If you've the time and patience, this is an unique and demanding game which deserves serious consideration.

PHIL 74%

● ***The cloning game***



▲ *Alien*-like alien talking about reproduction and the planet Migrax

NICK **The first time I played this was on the Atari ST and to tell you the truth this version is not all that different. Some of the edge has been taken off the graphics, but the game's 'feel' has been perfectly translated and playability remains the same. The icon communication system is a bit strange though, with loads of icons, one even representing bananas! This is very off-putting at first but once you have learned the basic icons you can begin to speed the system up. *Captain Blood* will without doubt take some time to get into but if you can persevere it should be rewarding.**

76%



▲ **Down in the canyons at the controls of a Oorxx biomissile**

BLOOD PRESSURE

- Try to discover the locations of other aliens by saying CODE INFORMATION HELP.
- Save the game position regularly to maintain your progress.
- If the planet has defence missiles, fly low or you'll be destroyed.

Captain Blood is one of those games you either love or hate. Personally I like it. If you play it in the dark you can really get into the unique atmosphere of the game. The version we played was the +3 disk game, and while apart from the music intro it was just one load, I don't know how it'll be crammed into 48K machines.

MARK 79%

THE ESSENTIALS

Joysticks: Cursor, Kempston, Sinclair
Graphics: well-drawn status panel and smooth wire-frame planet landscapes
Sound: fair 128K rendition of Jean-Michel Jarre's title tune, varied ingame effects
General rating: a complex and innovative game

Presentation	82%
Graphics	78%
Sound	70%
Playability	74%
Addictive qualities	73%

OVERALL 76%

SPITTING IMAGE

● ***Latex leaders fight it out***

Producer **Domark**
Buckets of spit **£9.95 cass**
£14.95 disk
Author **Walking Circles**

If you're a regular watcher of *Spitting Image* you shouldn't be surprised by the game, which has got some great presentation but – like the show's jokes – is a little rough around the edges and lacking in originality. The basic idea is that in seven year's time WWIII will happen and all the leaders are battling it out to be top dog. The six contenders are Ronnie Reagan (I'm right because Nancy says so), the Pope (I'm right because God tells me so), the Ayatollah Khomeini (and me), PW Botha (we're right because we're white), Mrs Thatcher (we're right because we're right-wing) and, of course, Gorbachev (I know we're wrong, I know).

Portraits of these world leaders are arranged around a picture of the world (complete with burning fuse). You start the game by picking which leaders are going to fight it out next and the second leader you pick is the one you control. The scene then switches to a background appropriate to one leader and combat begins. Now we all know world leaders never engage in physical violence – they have armies and Oli North for that – but here they do, each with his or her own special move. Mrs T, for example, blows cigar smoke in her opponent's face, while Reagan head butts. You can also call in a friend who will run on to lob missiles at an opponent, Mrs Thatcher uses Denis while the Pope has his cardinals. On 128K machines it's all one load, on 48K machines leaders must be loaded individually.

Once a leader has been beaten five times he's out of contention for 'leader of a thermonuclear pile of dust'. If your leader survives you can then pick another two leaders to tango together. When all of them have been beaten the lights go out and you take on a mystery guest.

The identity of this mystery guest isn't all that hard to discover, I've finished the game quite a few times and wasn't too impressed by its difficulty. What did impress me was the quality of the graphics which amusingly recreate the puppet caricatures used in the TV show. Sound isn't too bad either. The humorous effect soon wears off, however, when you've got to struggle with a sluggish control response. In two-player mode it's obviously more fun, but hardly enough to justify purchase if you've got any other kind of two-player beat-'em-up game.

MARK 68%

PHIL The six world leaders are excellently drawn, with presentation to match. Sadly, the gameplay is far too easy to master. Once the best tactics are discovered, completion becomes a mere formality by repeated use of one move. Even ignoring this problem, I'm disappointed that more imagination wasn't used for such an intriguing licence. *Spitting Image* is just a mediocre beat-'em-up which looks far better than it plays.
55%

THE ESSENTIALS

Joysticks: Cursor, Kempston, Sinclair
Graphics: beautiful title screen and some easily recognisable ingame characters
Sound: great title tune but only simple bashing, ingame effects
Options: definable keys. Choose which leader you play
General rating: disappointing after the hilarious TV series

▼ **The caricature graphics are great, gameplay isn't**



BURNING RUBBER

- Stand on the left-hand edge of the screen and keep using the special weapon.
- At the same time, keep calling up your sidekick.
- To defeat the last leader, just keep jiggling the joystick and pressing fire – you *should* win.

Spitting Image is one of those games that will obviously sell because of its name, which is fortunate for Domark, since there's little other reason to buy it. As you can see from the tips gameplay is repetitive and flawed. The best part of the game is undoubtedly the graphics – like so many other licensed games.

NICK 68%

Presentation	78%
Graphics	75%
Sound	77%
Playability	62%
Addictive qualities	57%
OVERALL	**64%**

Producer **Melbourne House**
Glossy packaging costs **£9.99 cass**
Author **Paul Murray**

The Federation Star Fleet has been reduced to debris and once again the Earth lies at the mercy of an enormously powerful alien spaceship. 'But why?' you may well wonder, what have we done that makes everyone hate us. Well, I'll tell you, it's because we're stupid. Just look at this game. Originally a mediocre, rather sluggish 16-bit arcade adventure, remarkable only for its graphics, now it's been converted to the Spectrum to become even more mediocre.

The hero who can save Earth (but really shouldn't), is Drak. He's the last of some superwarriors called Obliterators. You take control after he's been beamed aboard the alien ship with only a pistol to defend himself. There are five tasks to complete: disable four key parts of the ship, then nick something to activate the escape shuttle before the ship explodes.

Producer **US Gold**
Depth charge **£8.99 cass**
£12.99 disk
Author **Emerald Software**

Apparently *The Deep* is a conversion from a coin-op, in which case a) an old one, or b) one that bombed (or possibly both). In it you're the skipper of a ship under attack from squid, jellyfish and octopi, not to mention enemy submarines launching mines and homing torpedoes.

For defensive reasons only, of course, you have eight depth charges automatically, slowly replaced after use. Blast enough enemies and a flag will float to the surface, collect it and a helicopter rushes to the scene. There are five types of flag providing diving bells, homing missiles, speed-up, smart bombs and energy bombs.

Once enough enemies have been destroyed a small icon flashes at the bottom of the ocean and pressing ENTER turns your ship into a diving bell. You must then 'dive, dive, dive', collect the icon and return to the surface to go on to the next level. There are three levels of mine-dropping fun (mind-dropping?) before the bonus stages. In the first bonus stage a large ship is heading towards you at full

OBLITERATOR

● *Obliterating without a blitter*

Drak can be moved left and right in the conventional manner or, by moving the highlighted cursor along icons at the foot of the screen, do more complex things like jumping, rolling over, etc. Pressing SPACE shows weapons collected, components half-inched, shield level and score.

Needless to say the spaceship is packed with aliens and automated defence systems. Success depends on selecting the right combination of icons so you might, for example, run, jump, roll over and shoot. On the 16-bit machines the slowness of things allowed you to admire the graphics, here they only serve to irritate. The graphics aren't bad, but neither are they good enough to make up for frustrating gameplay. The icon-control system, for example, allows a wide-range of moves but in tight situations is too awkward. This doesn't spoil play altogether, but if you have little patience, I'd advise you to give *Obliterator* a miss.

PHIL 60%



▲ Drak in a quick draw contest with alien fiend

MARK Despite what Phil says I think this is a pretty good game. I really enjoyed using the icons to put together some complex moves. Drak is nicely animated, the backdrops are good and enemies colourful. The 128K tune is acceptable and while I didn't find it as playable as *Barbarian*, *Obliterator* is worth a look.

80%

THE ESSENTIALS

Joysticks: Cursor, Kempston, Sinclair
Graphics: Drak's many movements are well animated
Sound: atmospheric 128K ingame tune
General rating: it's all down to personal taste, but patient players will enjoy it more than others

Presentation	74%
Graphics	78%
Sound	80%
Playability	68%
Addictive qualities	65%

OVERALL 70%

THE DEEP

● *Relax on a leisurely cruise (missile)*



▲ Those famous arcade makers Woodplace Inc give the Speccy a history lesson

PHIL This is one of the most primitive-looking full-price games I've seen for ages. Sprites are simply animated, while colour is used in large blocks causing much attribute clash. Worst of all, collision detection is very dodgy – it seems to be character block instead of pixel. Sound is pathetic as well. The one professional technical aspect is the smooth horizontal scrolling of the well-drawn background. Even so, this is a strangely compulsive game, proving simple ideas are often best. Better presentation, faster action and a lower price tag could've made a flawed game good.

52%

steam, your must destroy it with energy bombs. Succeed and you are then placed in a *Missile Command*-type situation where you use a cursor to aim a laser. You must protect passing ships by hitting the enemy laser beams with your own laser. This done it's back to depth-charging.

Clearly rather lacking in depth (sorry), this game suffers even more from appalling graphics: small blobby sprites wobbling unconvincingly across the screen. Actual playability isn't bad, but the price of passage is unacceptable.

MARK 35%

THE ESSENTIALS

Joysticks: Kempston, Sinclair
Graphics: primitive sprites, but decent scrolling
Sound: beepy title tune, simple effects
General rating: it plays better than it looks, but it's still overpriced

Presentation	40%
Graphics	36%
Sound	32%
Playability	46%
Addictive qualities	49%

OVERALL 44%

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BUDGET BUREAU

1.99

New on **Mastertronic**'s 'flippy flippy' label this month is ***Nonamed*** (56%), a tale of kings, wicked wizards and courageous knights. You have to battle your way (ninja style) through the Castle With No Name which has been filled full of terrible ogres. All the graphics in the game are excellent and would do any full-price game proud, it's just a pity the gameplay isn't so good – it takes ages to get used to the continual attack by various nasty creatures. After a bit of practice you can get some enjoyment from just walking around and admiring all the locations.

Another Mastertronic 'flippy flippy' game, with the Spectrum and Amstrad versions on the same tape, is ***Reveal*** (29%). The object of the game is to memorise an onscreen isometric pattern. Then, when the screen is plunged into darkness, you have to manoeuvre your object, lighting up the blocks again (sounds like fun, doesn't it?). Once they are all fully lit you can move on to the next screen and repeat the process. This soon gets extremely tedious, especially when aliens decide to darken the blocks on the opposite side of the screen again (fume!). I doubt whether anyone would find *Reveal* worth even £1.99.

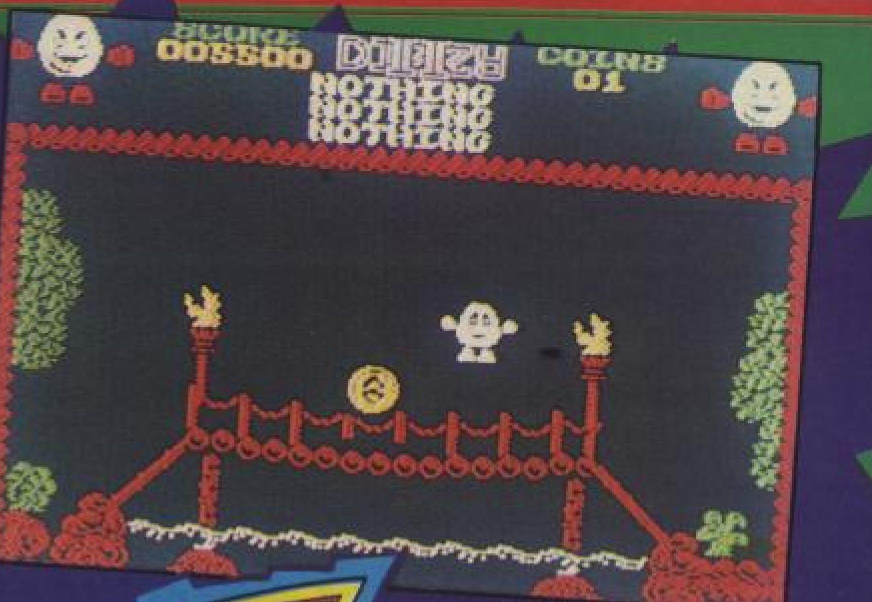
If, on the other hand, you'd rather suffer with blocky sprites and plenty of colour clash then **Gamebusters** have got the very thing. ***Zone Trooper*** (30%) is another arcade adventure but this time you're the lucky crew member chosen to collect plasma pods scattered across a spaceship. This involves bouncing around the ship – and surrounding landscapes – while popping the odd alien and collecting anything in sight. Some particularly nice sequences are the airlocks and the ship's computer but it's hardly worth buying just for those. *Zone Trooper* could provide an hours exploring for the hardened arcade adventure player, but it won't last long.

If you liked the last two **Atlantis** titles – *Gunfighter* and *Cerius* – then the author's latest should proved welcomed. Called ***Tank Command*** (71%) it asks you to fight your way across an island in a tank, blasting away the enemy with a choice of either grenades or bombs. This may sound easy but you soon find out that if you don't bomb the enemies in the correct order you will end up in lots of little bits all over the screen. Simple sounding, but incredibly addictive. *Tank Command* is a pleasing mixture of arcade and strategy with simple, but effective graphics. Well done, Atlantis.

The new offering from **Silverbird** this month is a simplistic race game, ***International Speedway*** (24%). You have to test your streetwise racing skills in the world of league racing. All it involves is racing around track after track of simplistic graphics, the most exciting part is when you crash into another racer – not my idea of fun. If I had £1.99 knocking about this would be one of the last games I would buy, definitely not recommended.

2.99

Code Masters dominate the £2.99 slot this month with three games, the first of which is yet another of their famous cartoon adventures. This time it's called ***Bigfoot*** (47%) and stars a furry monster who goes by the name of Footsy! The graphics in the game are just mindblowing, not because they are any good, but because you just can't tell what's going on. There are three



Eggs never get a rest do they? One minute they're being put out of a job by health ministers and the next they are starring in their very own game. This is the second eggy adventure from Code Masters with my mate Dizzy in it. Called *Treasure Island Dizzy* it is (surprise, surprise) set on an island full of hidden treasure.

Dizzy booked himself on a round-the-world cruise but somehow ended up in a spot of bother with the captain, Long John Silver. All his fellow passengers turned out to be pirates and he was in a right pickle (you could say he was a pickled egg!). He ended up walking the plank but just managed to scramble onto a nearby island (groan).

The graphics on the island are all cartoon-style with an impressive amount of colour and great detail. The Dizzy sprite is the same as in the original game with all its jumps and cute little rolls. It's this cuteness coupled with the playability that makes it so addictive. The puzzles in the game are just at the right difficulty level but there is one aspect that I found annoying, you only get one life! Poor Dizzy can be going along nicely and if he just puts one foot wrong – he's omelette.

There are two ways to complete the game. One is to collect all the gold coins (some are really well hidden), and the other is to find some way off the island and back to the friendly Yolkfolk. Either way I guarantee you will get hours of fun out of this game, a must for everyone's software collection.

Code Masters £2.99 .... 87%



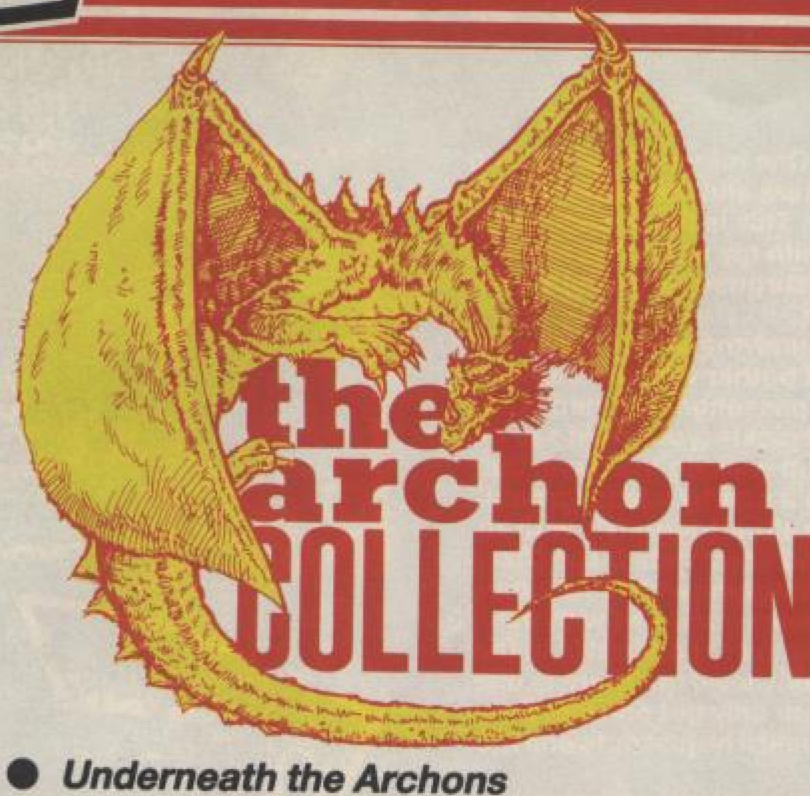
colour options to try but they are all pretty bad and cause clash unless you have them totally monochrome. There just isn't enough in this game to keep me occupied for long and I don't recommend it unless you are a hardened Code Masters fan.

What, another Code Masters BMX game?! Yes, I'm afraid so. The programmer that brought you *4 Soccer Simulators* has now come up with ***BMX Freestyle*** (76%). It's a great improvement on the original BMX game that had an overhead view of a track and tiny bikes but *BMX Freestyle* is just too hard. All the graphics are excellent (what I've seen of them); well-defined bikes and backgrounds on most sections with the usual jolly Code Masters tunes and effects. The only problem is that it's almost impossible to get past the first section (wheelies). I did it once, only to foul up and squash my mates on the ramp section that comes after (splurt!). If you think you are skilled enough to do well and stay on your BMX, give this one a whirl.

Flushed with the success of winning the Embassy World Darts Championship Jocky Wilson has gone and got himself a darts game, ***Jocky Wilson's Darts Challenge*** (59%) courtesy of **Zeppelin Games**. It's one of those games where all you do is aim the wobbling dart somewhere near the place you want it to go and hope for the best. You would have thought a beer-drinking tournament would have been included but alas all you get is the screen where you throw the dart and an aerial view of some beer belly throwing a dart at the board. It's a fair simulation and I'm sure fans of the sport will rush out to buy it.

Another Zeppelin Games offering is ***Rally Simulator*** (27%), a dire car racing game that just has no appeal at all. The car skids and slides about the monochrome play area seemingly out of control and it can even run over the houses causing hardly any damage. There are no decent sound effects to speak of and to complete even the first level is an impossibility. *Rally Simulator* would simply be a waste of money if you bought it, stay away! (No way! This is a great game – well, not bad. Phil and I had great fun struggling to complete the first, incredibly hard level. Level Two is extremely hard – Stu.)

The final £2.99 priced game this month is from the **Hewson** budget label, **Rack-It**. Called ***Into Africa*** (69%) it is, unsurprisingly, set in the jungles of Africa. If your Spectrum days go back a few years you may remember the classic strategy/adventure *Lords Of Midnight*, well *Into Africa* is very similar in look and feel to that. The control method is the first thing that hits you, for some strange reason it has only three keys to select a whole host of options making it slightly difficult. The game itself should provide hours of play for adventure fans with forty controllable characters, eight radio operators and a massive landscape to explore.



Producer **Electronic Arts**
Witch's brew **£8.95 cass**
£14.95 disk
Author **Lynsoft, from a design by Freefall Associates**

The original *Archon* game, an enjoyable mix of strategy and arcade action, is now bundled with its sequel, never previously released on the Spectrum. *Adept* is the most complex by far. The game begins with each player (computer or human) armed with four adepts. These can be moved to practically anywhere on the board during a players' turn. Adepts can also create other creatures which can be moved around the board, but only in the sections in which they're created. There are four basic sections; fire, water, air and earth plus two void sections.

One way to win is for a player to occupy all six power squares. Four of these are constantly moving through the four elemental sections, while the remaining two are static in the void sections. Another way to win is destroy all the opposing player's Adepts – surviving created creatures disappear with the last Adept. To destroy an Adept, or any other creatures, a player must move one of his own creatures onto the target creature's square. The screen then switches to a Battleground display with the two joystick-controlled combatants alone, with just a few obstacles. Creatures have different attack patterns: Adepts fire missiles guided by the joystick; the Firebird emits a lethal force-field around itself; Wraiths are invisible except when they attack or play against the

● *Underneath the Archons*

computer. Each side has different characters.

It is also possible to win by an Apocalypse battle. This pits two Adepts against each other, winner-take-all. The Apocalypse spell is accessed by clicking twice on an Adept given sufficient spell power. Other magic includes curing half of a wounded creature's injuries, weakening an enemy creature, imprisoning a creature, releasing a creature and banishing a creature.

Sadly, all these added complexities diminish rather than improve gameplay. The ability to win by Apocalypse, or by simply destroying all the opponent's Adepts, make some very fast games possible – eliminating the need for strategy. Playing to win by occupying power squares is not much better, since Adepts are so crucial their battles are far more important than others. Another drawback is control, which allows one player to use a Sinclair port but forces the other to use the keyboard (3, 4, A, Q and Caps Shift or B, N, L, P and Symbol Shift). By comparison graphics and sound are effective and even good – for a strategy game. The original game (even without a Sinclair option) is much better – it got 83% way back in Issue 18. The sequel is marked below on its own, so readers without the original should add some marks, both for the original game and overall value for money.

STUART 70%

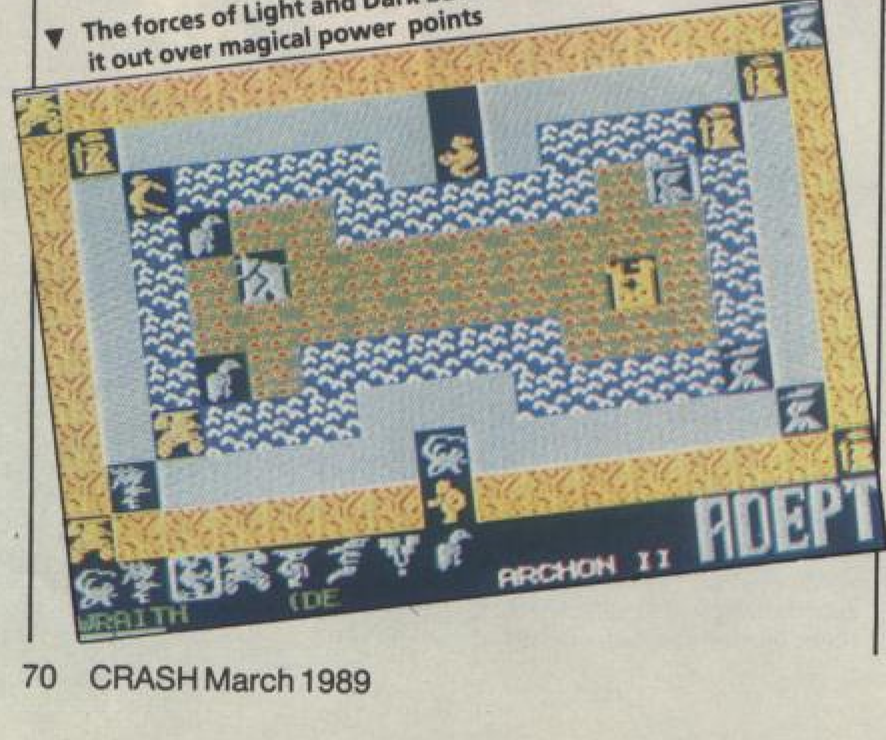
MYSTICAL TIPS

- Quickly occupy a Void square with an Adept – no created creatures can be sent against them there so they're the perfect last ditch defence.
- Since Power Points move through all the elemental bands you should concentrate your attack on just one band.
- Ignore the Apocalypse Spell, about the only time you can use it is when you're winning and all it does is even the odds.
- The Siren is most effective in the elemental bands with most obstructions as these block missiles while it sings its deadly song.



▲ Arcade action scene from the long-awaited *Archon* sequel

▼ The forces of Light and Dark battle it out over magical power points



PHIL **If it all seems a bit confusing at first, don't worry, persevere a bit with the slim instruction manual (and informative inlay card) and it all makes sense. In fact, my main fear about *Adept* is that it might be a bit too simple for much long-term interest. The original game is less complex but relies less on luck. And as with most strategy-based games, the two-player mode provides the most fun.**

71%

THE ESSENTIALS

Joysticks: Cursor, Kempston, Sinclair
Graphics: the landscape is blocky, but the small sprites are well-animated
Sound: various simple 48K firing and moving effects
Options: four skill levels
General rating: games mixing strategy and arcade skills are few and far between, so two for the price of one can't be a bad deal

Presentation	66%
Graphics	66%
Sound	36%
Playability	72%
Addictive qualities	73%
OVERALL	**72%**

FANTASY ROLEPLAYING

HEROES OF THE LANCE

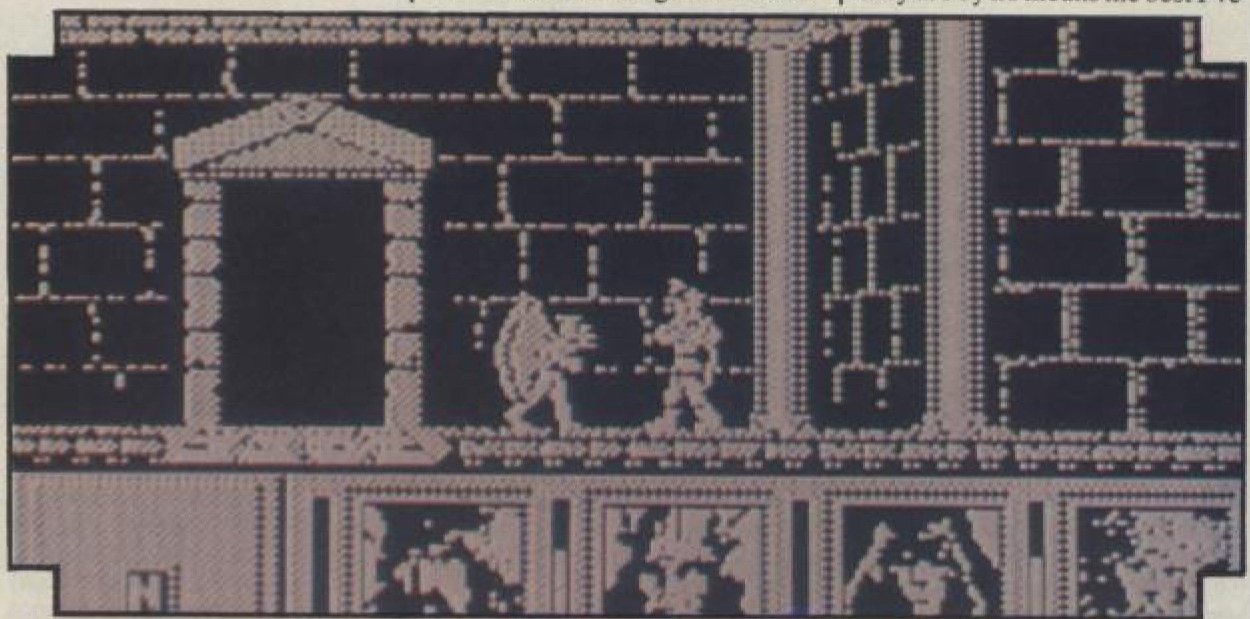
Caxton Press: US Gold/TSR/SSI
Magi: Alan Bridgeman, Matt Ellis, Craham Lilley, Teroman Irmak, Anthony Scott
Gold: £9.99 Cassette, £14.99 Disk

After having played – and finished – *Heroes Of The Lance* on both the ST and the Amiga, I looked forward to the release of the Spectrum versions with a little apprehension. On receiving the game I was pleased that the superb packaging, at least, was identical; a superbly-illustrated box and a well-written, 25-page rulebook. But one addition, a trouble-shooting guide, soon proved essential when the game crashed four times! With two tapes of data to juggle I began to feel my fears were about to be confirmed.

However, once the game actually loaded I was pleasantly surprised. The opening screens, with pictures of all the game's characters, were great and accompanied by some almost hypnotic music, perfectly set the scene for adventuring.

The game proper starts with a smallish, but well-detailed character standing in a dungeon. You control him with a joystick, and also the offscreen characters he represents – Tanis, Raistlin, Flint, Sturm, Tasslehoff, Caramon, Riverwind and Goldmoon.

Your mission is to guide these brave adventurers through this evil-looking dungeon and obtain a set of holy items called The Disks Of Mishakal. Only by



▲ Battling demons to stop the evil queen Takhisis

queen Takhisis creating the most evil empire in all eternity.

Of course, the Disks are not just lying there waiting for your group of heroes to grasp them in their sticky little maulers. The Disks are actively and professionally guarded by such nasties as Spectral Minions, Draconians, Trolls and hatchling dragons – to name but a few.

Even if your brave band manage to get into the mysterious place where the Disks are kept, they will still have to get past Kisthanth – a giant Black Dragon, who sprays lethal acid at all and sundry. She can only be killed in a special way – which you have to discover on your travels.

Each of the adventurers you control are depicted at the bottom of your screen via grey portraits, each with a small vertical bar showing their health. Death isn't too much of a frightening thing though, not when you have got someone like Goldmoon in the party. She has a magical staff which, if used correctly, will bring back to life any deceased character. She can also perform eight other divine miracles, such as healing your party's wounds to protect you from your evil opponents.

Mind you, Raistlin is no slouch either as he has a magic staff. He can cast eight spells which can do anything from entangling an opponent in a spider's web to merely putting them to sleep. While lacking such powers the rest of your party are great at fighting and detecti

Combat plays a rt of the game and is de sing the joystick. Spells, king up objects, are acco d by calling up menus and flipping through them with the joystick. One of the most useful options is save game.

While exploring the dungeon, entrances and exits are indicated by a flashing compass. Exploring them inevitably results in lots of combat and, if you survive long enough, discovering objects such as magical rings, superpower options and Gems which provoke unexpected responses from various monsters.

The graphics depicting the dungeon and the monsters are quite well put together – the programmers have utilised shading wherever possible – but they are by no means the best I've ever seen on the Spectrum. This said, after giving *Heroes* a thorough play, I found my original apprehension largely dispelled. Apart from a few loading problems, coupled with the reluctance of Goldmoon and Raistlin to cast certain spells in one or two life-or-death situations, the game has been converted in a very acceptable fashion and is well worth spending your hard-earned (speak for yourself – Nick) cash on.



▲ Down in the dungeons with one character sadly deceased

Presentation 88%
A great-looking box and a rulebook which is both informative and well-presented
Graphics 74%
Attractive, monochromatic graphics but not much variety
Sound 50%
Nice intro, but not much ingame sound
Playability 88%
Once loaded it all plays very well indeed
OVERALL 83%
A great conversion of an interesting and enjoyable fantasy roleplayer

FRNTLINE

A CRASH Smash

ANCIENT BATTLES

Producer: CCS
Author: RT Smith
Price: £14.95

Robert T Smith has become a strategy legend for WWII games like *Arnhem*, *Desert Rats* and *Vulcan* (we won't mention *Cyberknights*). However, for his latest game he's gone several centuries to recreate epic battles of the ancient world. Now you can step into the sandals of commanders like Julius Caesar, Alexander the Great, or even Attila the Hun.

Two tapes are present in the glossy, video-sized box. These contain separate Selection and Battle programs for 48K machines, a 128K program incorporating both of these, and four extra scenarios. A fifth scenario is automatically loaded with the game, while the extra large Chalons scenario only works on 128K machines.

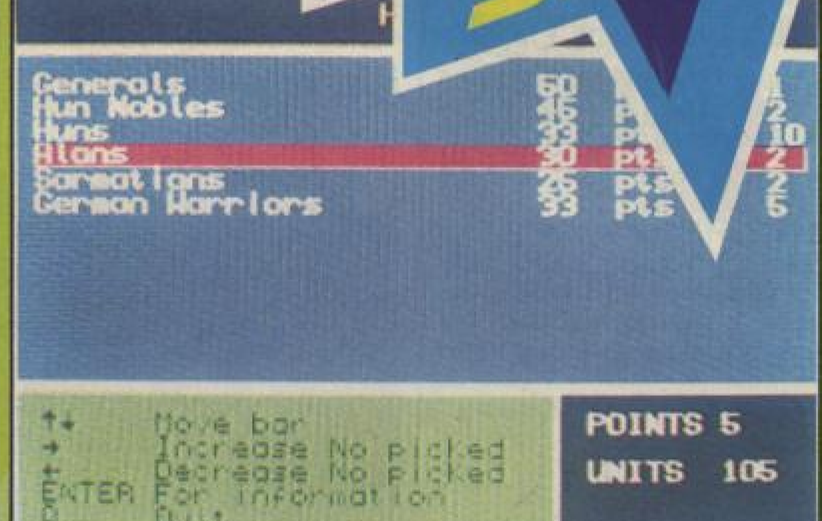
If you don't fancy one of the given scenarios, the easy-to-use Selection program allows you to set up your own battles (how about Hittites versus Huns?!). Any pair of 24 nations can be pitted against each other. Some nations also have a number of armies (relating to different historical periods/campaigns) to choose from.

The size of the battle is also variable. The smallest allows each army 750 unit points with which to 'buy' individual units, while the 'unlimited' option allows for epic battles with a total of up to 136 units (254 on 128K machines).

Only units applicable to the chosen nation can be selected, eg an Indian army has access to elephants. Selection of individual units is also not entirely free – minimum and maximum numbers for each type of unit are set. Unit types include various sorts of infantry, cavalry, spearmen and chariots.

Each of the five given scenarios has its own map. But for user-defined battles, a Map Designer option allows user-defined maps.

Once the battle is set-up, units must be deployed near the relevant edges of the map. Also, if an army has more than one general, each unit must be allocated to the command of one of them. This is important, as during play each general can only issue a limited number of orders to his units.



▲ Selecting Attila The Hun's Huns

To save the time-consuming business of manual deployment, an auto deployment option may be chosen. But first, a battle plan must be chosen. Left, central and right sections of the army can either charge, advance or defend.

Control of each army may be by player, computer or shared between the two. This last option allows a player to control the commander-in-chief's units, while the computer controls those of subordinate generals.

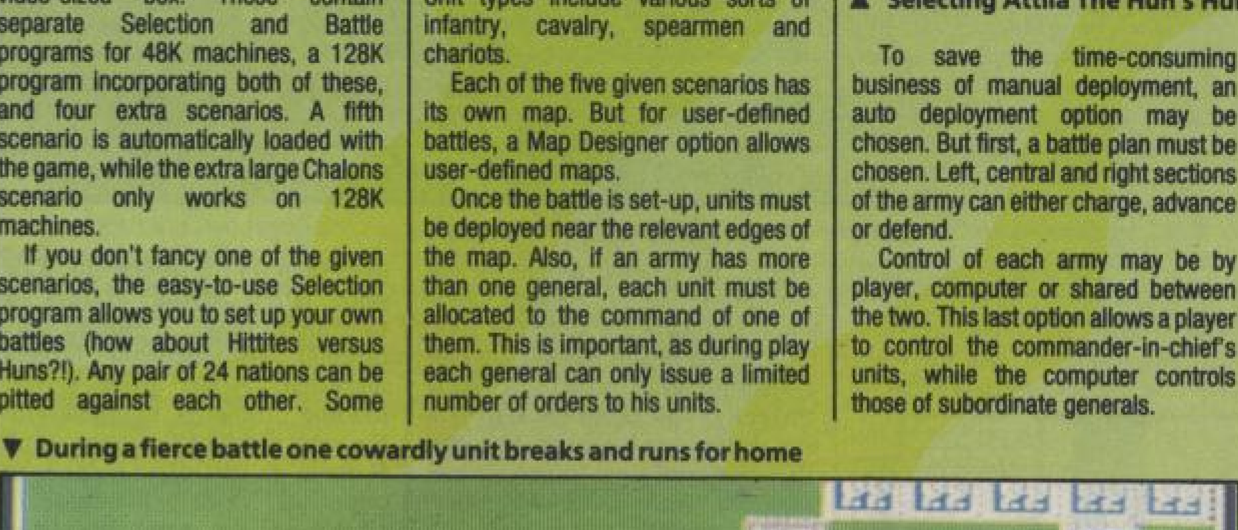
Players take it in turn to give orders. A cursor is used to select a unit, which can then either be ordered to move towards a cursor-set destination. However, each individual movement order (apart from units immediately adjacent to a general) uses up limited order points for each general. So to move units en masse, a unit can be ordered to follow another. Apart from being realistic, the limited number of individual orders makes for fluent play. Realism is also heightened by the delay of half or one whole turn before units far from their general carry out their orders.

Other options for a selected unit are a Report on the unit's attributes (including strength (numbers), morale and fatigue), and G for details of a general – both can be in the same space. This is the only form of stacking permitted – normal units may not occupy the same space.

Once both armies' orders have been given, simultaneous movement of units takes place. Shooting and hand-to-hand combat then take place. Units automatically fire at the nearest enemy unit. Hand-to-hand combat is also automatic between adjacent units.

After combat, some units may retreat or even be routed if they have serious losses. Routing units do not disappear, but instead change colour and gradually move towards the edge of the map. As no stacking of units is allowed, they also tend to realistically 'clog up' the battlefield. Routing elephant units may even trample their

▼ During a fierce battle one cowardly unit breaks and runs for home



own troops!

The simple order system is easy to use and makes play very fluent, so you shouldn't have to wait too long for a human opponent to make his moves. Despite this simplicity, the results of combat depend on a large number of conditions. For instance, the likelihood that a unit will rout even takes into account whether other friendly units can be seen routing.

Ancient Battles is a masterpiece of programming with a wide range of options. As usual with RT Smith's games, the game is accompanied by a comprehensive rulebook and another booklet containing historical notes on all the scenarios and armies present. Although graphically simplistic and lacking the complex order system of RT Smith's previous games, pitting armies of your own choice against each other is a fascinating experience and a great way to learn a bit of ancient history at the same time. Yet more good news is that the author is planning to produce a sequel, incorporating armies from 500-1200 AD.

Presentation 92%
The large glossy box – with Oli Frey artwork – contains a wealth of background information

Graphics 60%
Visually unimpressive play area, but the unit types are easily distinguished

Rules 88%
All aspects of play and selection are clearly explained

Playability 92%
The simple order system makes it very easy to get into, while the strategic realism is fascinating

OVERALL 93%
A fascinating and realistic wargame, offering great scope for designing new battles

WAR IN MIDDLE EARTH

Producer: Melbourne House
Author: Design by Alan Clark and Bob Clardy, programming by Mike Singleton
Price: £9.99

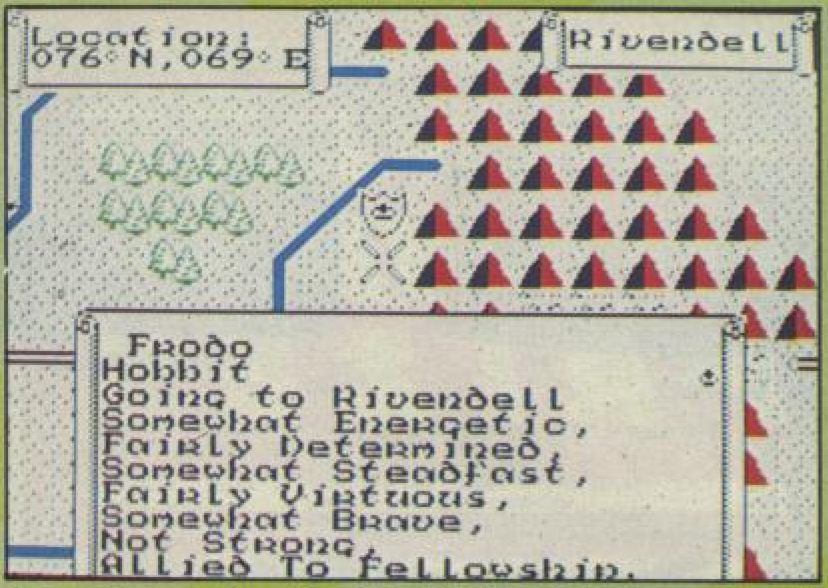
Melbourne House's first game based on JRR Tolkien's fiction was one of the most popular adventures ever, and a classic of computing game. The follow-up to *The Hobbit* was something of a sleeper, despite *The Lord Of The Rings* getting 9 out of 10 in Issue 26. For their third Tolkien game the software house has changed genres and produced a strategy game. The game is based on events detailed in Tolkien's *Lord Of The Rings* Trilogy. You play the part of Frodo the Hobbit, who has recently inherited The One Ring from his uncle Bilbo Baggins. This ring is the most powerful evil magic item in existence and was created by the evil necromancer Sauron.

Sauron made 19 other such rings and gave them to the leaders of the Elves, Dwarves and Humans. Once these rings were placed on the fingers of the recipients, they came under the power of The One Ring.

Due to a long series of events, the ring has come into your hands and you must destroy it by dropping it in a volcano situated in the middle of Sauron's evil realm. So you must muster your troops and friends to dispose of the evil artifact.

When the game is loaded you are presented with a map of all the known lands in Middle Earth. In the centre of the map is a gauntletted hand and to the left are three command options; File, Memo and Time.

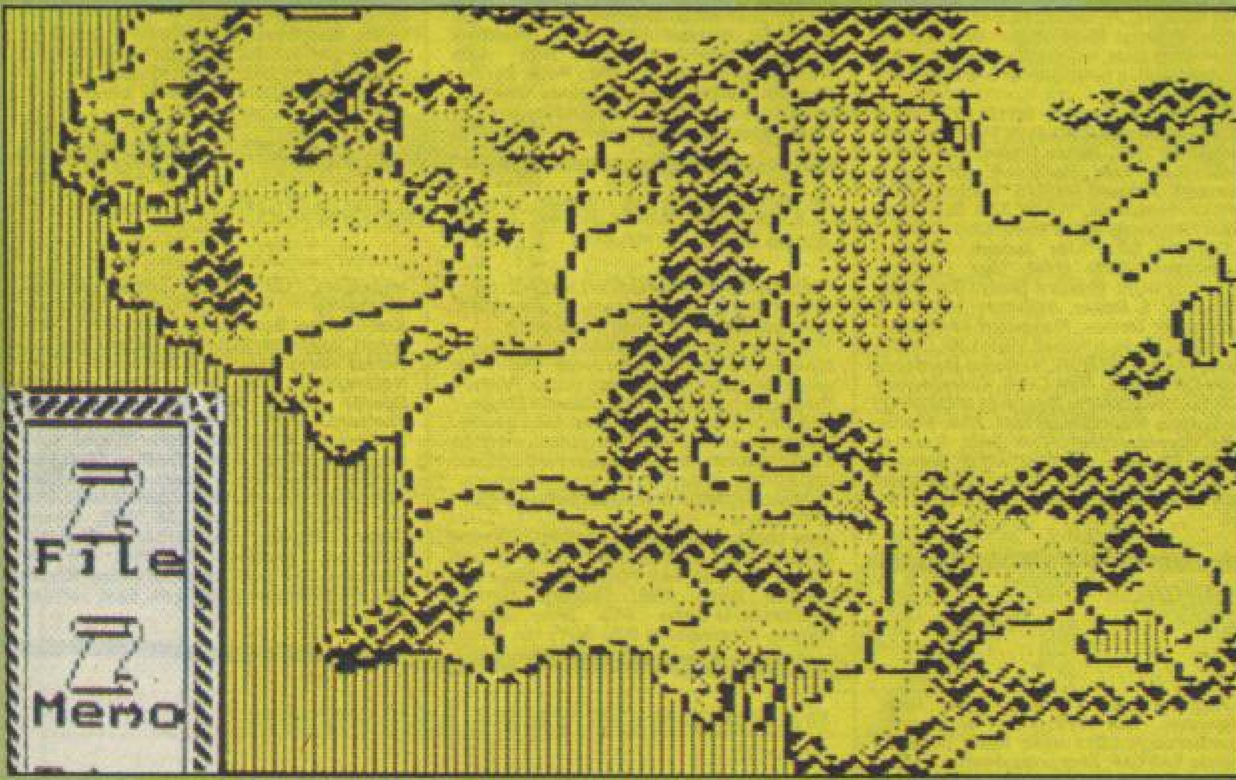
You control the gauntlet via either the keyboard or the joystick and by pressing fire on the map you get a more detailed view. Here you can see which units of troops and which individuals are hanging around. Friendly personnel are displayed as shields and it is possible for a large group of both individuals and units to be present in the same location.



▲ Preparing your forces for the onslaught of Sauron's warriors

You can find out full details of who is in this group – called a stack – by accessing your controls again. Here you are given a full rundown of your forces on a group by group, or individual by individual, basis. The details include such basic information as name and commander, as well as Energy, Determination, Steadfastness and Virtue. The level of these factors decides how well your forces move, fight and remain loyal.

If you press your fire button twice you obtain a sub-menu with four commands. This enables you to either set a specific destination for your troops, order one group to follow another, join your units together or return to the main menu.



▲ Map of all Middle Earth together with options

Once you have given them your orders you return to the main map. Here you can either choose File (save the game and set various options), Memo (state of the game info) or Time (which sets the game in action and make your troops obey your preset orders).

The aim is to move your troops to strategic forts, castles and the like so they're not decimated by Sauron's forces. When Sauron's troops attack yours, the game time is stopped again (as you make your orders) and the screen displays the campaign map with a pair of crossed swords representing battles.

The game then moves over to a special combat screen depicting every person in the battle. Soldiers are represented by small, animated figures and you can scroll across the battlefield to see them all.

You can control individuals by moving a cursor onto them and pressing fire. You can then either take direct control over them, or merely select an enemy for them to attack.

If combat is going badly – and it often does – you have the option of letting the ring-bearer wear the ring. This enables you to disappear from the sight of ordinary opponents and sneak away. There are disadvantages to this, though – your Virtue decreases at an alarming rate (so that you run the risk of becoming a servant of darkness, losing the game) and The Nine Nazgul can easily see you. The latter are very powerful magical servants of Sauron, who can all too easily defeat you, stealing the ring and returning it to Sauron.

Overall, the game's graphics are generally average – sound is nonexistent – and the combat sequences are pretty hard to control. That said, *War In The Middle Earth* goes to prove that if a games concept is sound and has the ability to capture your imagination – which this product certainly does – you don't need lots of flashy graphics to produce an enjoyable computer game.

Presentation 75%
Stylish packaging and comprehensive scenario to set the scene

Graphics 60%
Mostly pretty dull, but interesting combat scenes

Rules 72%
Informative and interesting

Playability 75%
Icon-driven control system easy to use, but the battles soon become repetitive

OVERALL 70%
An ambitious and intriguing game

WINNERS AND PRIZES

WIN A LESLIE CROWTHER LOOKALIKE
Issue 59

The Bobby Yazz Show is one gameshow that I wouldn't like to compete in, a correct response is well rewarded but one false step and you could wind up dead. In our comp the winner gets a Mr Game Show from Rainbow Toys. This has a robotic Leslie Crowther MC-ing the proceedings so you can challenge your friends to a game of *The Price is Right* in your own living room. **James Preece**, Harrow HA1 4AG is the fortunate recepient of this technological marvel.

Thirty second prizes of a copy of *The Bobby Yazz Show* will go to (deep breath) . . .
Tony Bosworth, Holme PE7 3RE; Stuart Smith, Walsall WS6 6DT; P Smith, Lincoln LN6 7PH; H J Hudson, Bradford BD3 0PE; Philip Flowers, Darlington DL2 2EZ; Stephen Tierney, Portsmouth PO4 OHS; P G Taylor, Telford TF1 4YE; Stewart Donald, Aberdeen AB2 2HR; Steven Wilkins, Dagenham RM8 1JS; Robert James, Loughborough LE12 7JN; Sean Clayton, Coventry CV5 6NN; Gregory Myles, Northampton NN7 4QJ; Neil Ashmore, Stockport SK12 7PU; Matthew Macariou, Buxton SK17 7RP; Ben Cartwright, Brierley Hill DY5 3NT; D Asser, Enfield EN3 7UQ; Alec Ramsey, Ashington RH20 3LP; Paul Hickey, Surrey KT4 85F; Jason Osborn, Daventry NN11 4AN; J R Moody, Oxon OX11 8LU; Harry Mortensen, Seaham Co.Durham; Michael Taylor, Ilkeston DE7 5SS; Stephen Willcox, Portland DT5 1HG; M D Ruslow, Halesowen B62 8HH; T McPherson, Kent BR8 8BS; Steven Ragless, Lancing BN15 0JZ; Paul Silverthorn, Poole BH15 4JS; Paul Fox, Wigton CA7 0PQ; Alan Thrope, Seaham SR7 7JD; Francine Solley, Tonbridge TN9 2QW.

REALLY FWIGHTENED
Issue 59

At 6:00pm every Monday evening weird people across the nation tune-in to the monochromatic adventures of The Munsters. We gave you a piccy of lovable Herman Munster and asked you to provide a suitable caption. The prize was for a winner (and friend) to go on an all-expenses paid trip to London Dungeons, plus a copy of *The Munsters* game – and **Paul Marchant**, Guilford GU4 8ET is the lucky winner.

Again Again are also offering thirty runners-up a copy of *The Munsters* game, they are:
Jason Turtle, Liverpool L6 2BD; Gavin Lang, Port Talbot SA1 27R; Rick White, Doncaster DN3 2LB; C Warburton, Warrington WA2 7PX; A Hulmes, Timperley WA15 7SZ; David Kirkman, Leeds LS17 0AL; Karl Bunyan, Lincoln LN3 5BD; Andrew Bushell, Crosskeys NP1 7DF; Andy Hewitt, Southsea PO5 2PS; Sean Crowcroft, Barnsley S75 3AQ; Kevin Butters, Romford RM6 4AQ; Steven Hockney, Birmingham B45 9LL; Michael Cerdan, Clackmannan FK13 6BH; Andrew Harvey, Clwyd CH5 3DA; P Geekie, RAF Laarbruch BFPO 43; James Elliott, Dakinfield SK16 5DW; Mark Waterworth, Warrington WA3 2BE; Ian Kelly, Rotherham S61 2LU; Andy Snell, Lowestoft NR33 8SB; Peter Yee, Pretatyn LL19 9HE; Colin Young, Glasgow G66 3PG; Jimmy Carter, Essex CO11 2RA; Adam Neal, Banbury OX16 9HN; Les Roberts, Wirral LU1 0EA; Alan Thorpe, Co.Durham SR7 7JD; Peter Allison, Thornaby TS17 0AJ; Robert Gabriel, Uffculme EX15 3EW; Christopher McNeil, Dumbarton G82 3HH; Bryan Sutton, Stafford ST19 5HR; G Jackson, Manchester M9 2GP.

COME BACK CHUCK
Issue 59

The Muncher was reviewed way back in issue 56 under the title *T-Wrecks*, but due to a marketing deal with the makers of Chewits it has been reborn with the new title. We gave you a rather eye twisting puzzle and asked you to tell us which path the large green monster should follow to reach his packet of Chewits. 10 winners will receive a year's supply of Chewits (that's 365 packets, so don't eat them all at once). The lucky people are . . .
Colin M Young, Kirkintilloch G66 3PG; Gregory Myles, Weedon NN7 4QJ; Michael Smith, Abbeydale GL4 8LS; John Haddon, Port Glasgow PA14 5DD; M D Ruston, Halesowen B62 8HH; Torquil MacGregor, West Linton EH46 7BH; Peter Southern, St Helens WA10 3PG; Daniel Adams, Maidstone ME15 7BQ; Peter Unwin; London N22 4HD; Michael Brown, Dewsbury WF13 4LQ. . . . and don't forget to always brush your teeth.

SKY HIGH
Issue 59

Out of the hundreds of entries for the incredibly generous *Thunder Blade* from **US Gold** it seems not that many bothered to go down to the library to ID the mystery choppers. What a lazy bunch! Anyway, four brainy people will be treated to a hour long chopper ride – much better than the hydraulic arcade machine. **Malcolm Sims**, Canterbury CT1 1YF; **Steven Gray**, Redditch B98 8QG; **S Edwards**, Falmouth TR11 45W; **Andy Rigby**, Derby DE7 3TN are the lucky winners.

15 second-prize winners will receive a *Thunder Blade* T-shirt . . .
Robert Knapper, R A F Bruggen; Rory Mann, Fiboro GU14 8PB; Miles Murphy, Essex SS0 0DR; Alan Mead, Derby DE6 6JL; Leon Wardzinsui, Perth PH2 0AS; Paul Francis, Barton-on-Humber DN18 6AW; Crawford Johnston, Kildary IV18 0NZ; J Spilling, Oxford OX2 6TW; Charles Allen, Colchester CO4 3YN; Rowan Smith; Market Harborough LE16 9LD; Neil Beaman, Leeds LS25 2EF; Mark Inglis, Sheffield S31 8FL; Liam MacKenzie, Inverness IV2 3RL; Owen Meadows, Northants NN9 6BZ; D Snutch, Southampton Hants.

25 third prize winners will receive a copy of the CRASH Smash game *Thunder Blade* . . .
Troy Owen Roberts, Corsham SN13 0DU; M R Major, Andover SP10 2DY; John Dumbell, Wigan WN4 9LQ; Stephen Aspland, Ilchester BA22 8JR; Paul Bickerton, Blackpool FY6 9EF; A Rasheed, Houndslow TW3 2NT; Richard Baker, York YO6 1JU; Michal Zablochi, Newbury RG15 0TX; Chris Walbey, Huntingdon PE17 4TW; Antony Shawyer, Nottingham NG15 6DP; Noel Johnson, Shenstone WS14 0ND· Neil Owen, Hazelmere HP15 7EE; R Stevens, Saundersfoot SA69 9JP; John Connolly, Co.Carlow Ireland; Shahid Nawaz, Handsworth B20 3QY; Alan Packard, Hornchurch RM12 5LL; John Bristow, Kent DA8 1NL; Peter Carruthers, Liverpool 7; Colin Price, Halesowen B63 3JE; Ben Cardew, Cromer NR27 9NF; Paul Broyd, Solihull B92 9DT; Peter Allison, Thornaby TS17 0AJ; Stephen King, Surrey CR4 7HB; Keith Roberts, Plymouth PL5 4ET; Andrew Jolliffe, Sherton SN16 0NQ. And last but by no means least, fourth prize winners will be presented with a helicopter all of their own (a toy one of course) . . .
Kevin Marlow, Bristol BS12 6YB; Rick White, Doncaster DN3 2LB; Paul Hatwell, Weald HA3 7HE; James Brown, Dewsbury WF13 4LQ; Alex Herbrand, Offenburg Germany; Waheed Rasool, Watford WD1 8NF; C Prettyman, Turriff AB5 8ES; Guy Sadler, Berkeley GL13 9HH; Alan Thorpe, Co.Durham SR7 7JD; Joseph Burston, Cheltenham GL52 6HW; Max Lindsay, Wirral L62 8DE; Richard Berry, Skegness PE24 5AD; S Bailey, Salisbury SP2 7HT; Christopher Davies, Fishguard SA65 9BJ; Jaswinder Soor, Southall UB1 1JG; Daniel Evans, Derby DE3 8DU; Nicholas Harrison, Goole DN14 7QE; Neil Clark, Cramlington NE23 7EU; A D Jolliffe, Sherston SN16 0NQ; Lee Sutton, Manchester M31 2RA; Martin White, Crowborough TN6 2HS; Sean S Wilson, Co.Derry BT47 3RG; P Render, Dewsbury WF13 3RZ; R Philip, Sleaford NG34 9HW; Peter Taylor, Oswestry SY11 2XH.

TELL US A STORY
Issue 59

Techno Cop wasn't much cop, but *Butcher Hill* looks promising and Gremlin were generous with the prizes: three radio controlled toys, a red Ferrari and a pair of tanks. To win these marvels of modern technology we asked you to write a short story about either game and send them to us. There are obviously a lot of budding authors out there because the entries flooded in. Sadly there could only be one winner and **Timothy Hill** of Daventry NN11 4RN is the fortunate chap who gets them with battries included.

Fifty runners-up will receive a copy of *Butcher Hill* and *Techno Cop* . . .
Peter Southern, St Helens WA10 3PG; John Clifton, Dartford DA3 8QY; P Brown, Dewsbury WF13 4LQ; Richard Burrough, Cheltenham GL54 3BY; James Macklin, Grays RM16 2UA; William Dunk, Huddersfield HD8 8PP; Graham Charlton, Kent DA12 1LY; Tracy Thomson, Rhyl LL18 4RN; David Whibley, Maidstone ME15 8AX; Matthew Clark, Bristol BS4 1HQ; Christopher Allen, Sheffield S19 6RL; Paul Richards, Walsall WS6 6PE; Matthew Bradley, Sheffield S30 3NL; Alan Woodcock, Bolton BL2 5RL; Peter Byrom, Oldham OL2 5BY; Anthony Hyde, Brighton BN1 3DJ; Kevin McMahon, Co.Tyrone BT79 OTA; Richard Jones, Knutsford WA16 9PZ; Steven Downey, Worthing BN14 7LL; Glenn Taylor, Trefriw Gwynedd; Peter Allison, Thornaby TS17 OAT; Lee Hodkinson, Manchester M24 3EN; David Blackburn, Lymm WA13 9JU; Dean Horne, Langwith NG20 9DL; Thomas Deval, Huntingdon PE17 5NX; Robert Sibley, Taunton TA2 7QQ; David Mason, Stow TD1 2RJ; Daniel Curran, Co. Donegal Eire; Jonathon Wilson, Co. Tyrone BT70 3NP; Stefan Morton, Blackwood ML11 9SX; Michael Scott, Aberdeen AB2 OFD; Lee Hawson, New Ollerton NG22 9QY; Kirstie Campbell, East Lothian EH32 OPA; Tadhg Gleeson, Co.Tipperary Ireland; Shacha Osbourne, London SE13 7DQ; Simon Bennett, Midhurst GU29 9QF; Glen Farrell, Bolton BL2 6BG; Allan Walsh, Lowton WA3 3JG; Colin MacDonald, Monifieth DD5 4RZ; Peter Yee, Prestatyn LL19 9HE; Rowan Smith, Market Harborough LE16 9LD; Alistair Paice, Pulborough RH20 4LU; Simon Wells, Mansfield NG18 3HT; Craig Buchan, Aberdeen AB4 5QL; Richard Heath, East Dereham NR19 2RY; Jonathan Webb, Sunderland SR4 8LP; Ben Huglin, Liverpool L18 2HE; Chris Kjolsen, Harlow CM19 4NX; CRASH Reader, London E9; Sam Ho, Glossop SK13 8QF.

THEY CALL ME THE WANDERER
Issue 59

The story writing theme didn't end with the Gremlin comp, we also taxed your grey matter in the competition for Elite's new game *Wanderer*. This time the theme was a space-travelling adventurer/poker player. The winner will receive a handheld Casio colour TV and a Panasonic personal stereo cassette player. And that's not all, an Elite T-shirt and a goodie bag (along with the technical gizmos) will go to **Mark Waterworth**, Warrington WA3 2BE as well.

25 second prize winners will receive a copy of *Wanderer* . . .
June Rowe, Launceston PL15 9HX; Wayne Greenwood, Halifax HX4 8JB; Robert Sibley, Taunton TA2 7QQ; Jean Marc Lai, London SE15 5RB; Richard Garner, Newcastle-U-Lyme ST5 3PA; Shahid Nawaz, Birmingham B20 3QY; Ian Laver, Middlesex UB7 7PB; Louise Brown, Dewsbury WF13 4LQ; Spencer Kibblewhite, Scunthorpe DN15 9UT; Chris Aylott, Eastleigh SO5 1GP; Aston Brooker, Hemel Hampstead HP2 5RR; John Rush, Nottingham NG8 5FS; Adam Lackie, Bordon GU35 0SP; Chris Delahunty, Thetford IP24 3NW; Sian Williams, Blackwood NP2 1UD; Tom Stephenson, Crediton EX17 5JR; Thomas Odwyer, London SE15 2HU; Jason Foster, Filey YO14 9AF; Steven Hope, Carlisle CA2 7PS; Ian Roberts, Whiston L35 3RW; Steven Green, Epping CM16 5ES; Reginald Peterson, Tottenham N15 4RP; C Welsh, Glasgow G14 9JR; Leon Griffiths, Exeter EX4 5EG; Kristie Campbell, East Lothian EH32 0PA.

ROARING AHEAD
Issue 59

Fire And Forget is the latest game to appear from the Titus portacabin, and takes the player around the world blasting all in sight. We gave you two piccies of a Thunder Master and asked you to ring the ten differences. **Toni Jory**, Bristol BS19 9BA is the winner of the CD/MIDI hi-fi system, and a copy of *Fire And Forget*.

25 runners-up will find a copy of *Fire and Forget* in the post to them very soon, they are . . .
David Jones, Market Rasen CN8 3RE; Mark Batts, Watford WD5 0DB; Stuart Wilson, Co. Antrim . N.Ireland; James Douglas, Aberdeen AB2 8VX; Richard Green, Dudley DY3 3HZ; Daniel Brice, Bristol BS15 2EN; Alex Kevill-Davies, Chessington KT9 1EY; L Hokim, Safat Kuwait; Ken Holt, Bridgwater TA6 7PE; Ian Woolacott, Loughborough LE11 0SN; Mark Bolland, Taunton TA3 5AF; Shaun Stoddart, London SE4 2SR; Minh Lai, London E2 8LD; Jamie Conroy, Co.Down BT23 4PQ; Mark Wilkinson, Bristol BS2 9UR; David Clark, Dundee DD5 4EG; Ben Sullivan, Lymington SO41 9GF; Adrian Parsons, Dudley DY11 2HN; Mark Lockwood, Kings Lynn PE32 1LW; Steven Sherwood, Harrow HA2 6LQ; Seamus McCready, Co. Antrim BT36 7UP; Mark Nyous, Wilmslow SK9 4BD; Dylan Payne, Millbrook PL10 1EF; Clare Newman, Ipswich IP10 0SS; Rick White, Doncaster DN3 2LB.

RAIDERS OF THE LAST VIDEO
Issue 58

Remember Issue 58 and that great *Total Eclipse* demo. All you had to do was play it and send in your high score. After checking for any score exaggeration Incentive picked **Steven King** (the Ed's favourite author – Stu) (although the spelling's different, Stu – Ed), Coventry CV4 9JX. Steven will receive copies of both *Raiders Of The Lost Ark* and the prequel *Indiana Jones And The Temple Of Doom*. And so that Steven doesn't get peckish halfway through watching Dr Jones in action, a crate of Cadbury's Pyramints will also be winging their way to his abode.

Nine runners-up will receive a crate of Pyramints each. They are . . .
Robert Gabriel, Uffculme EX15 3EW; Yui Hong Ng, Colwyn Bay LL29 9UH; Brian Wood, Grimsby DN33 1DG; Timothy Ford, Aldershot GU12 5HR; James McGhee, Norwich NR5 9DY; Kevin Woolley, Rugeley WS15 1HJ; Simon Brown, Portsmouth PO4 9NF; Sarah Ford, Aldershot GU12 5HR; Mark Goodall, Taunton TA1 2AY.

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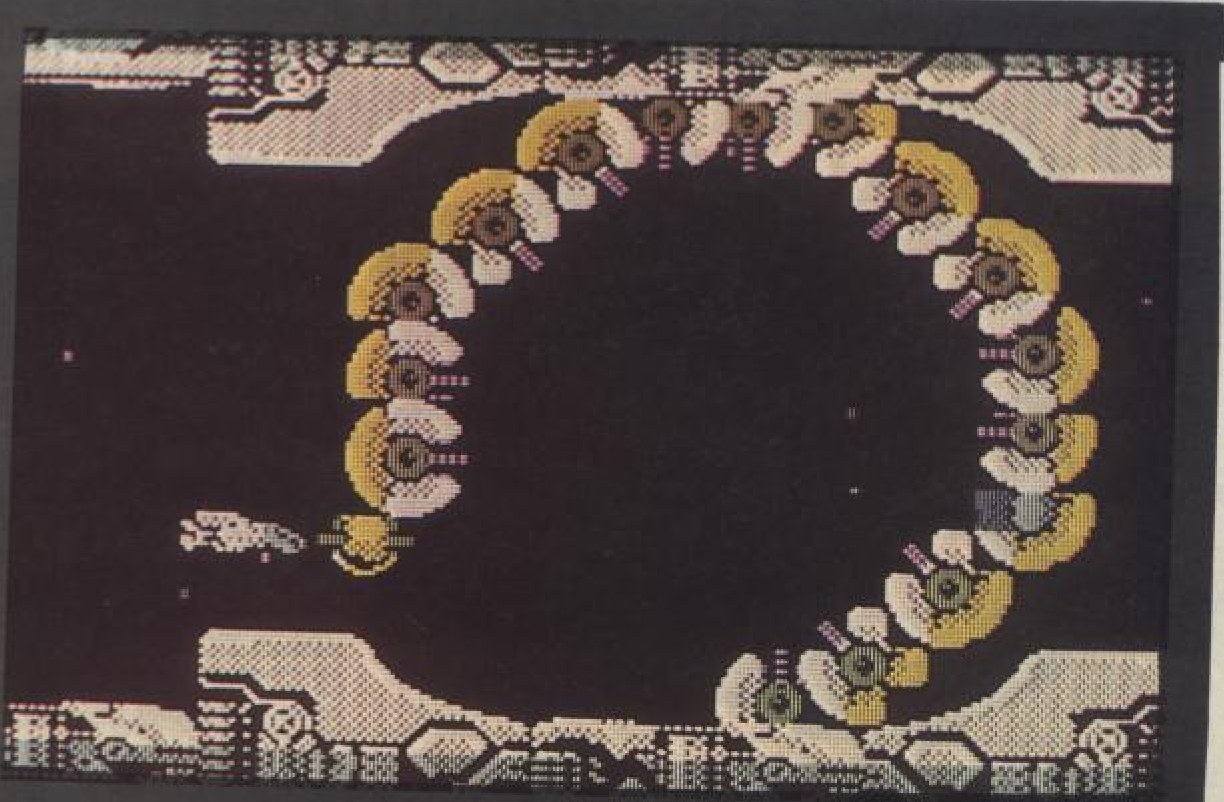
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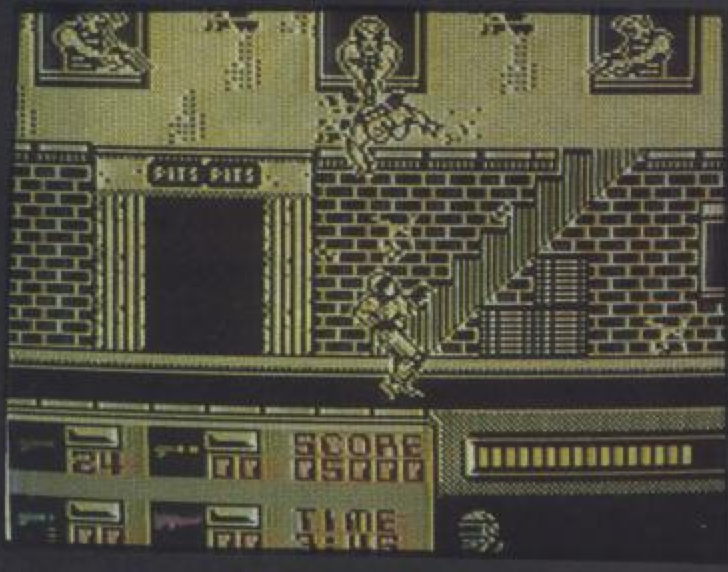


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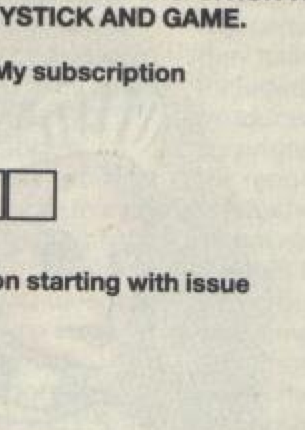
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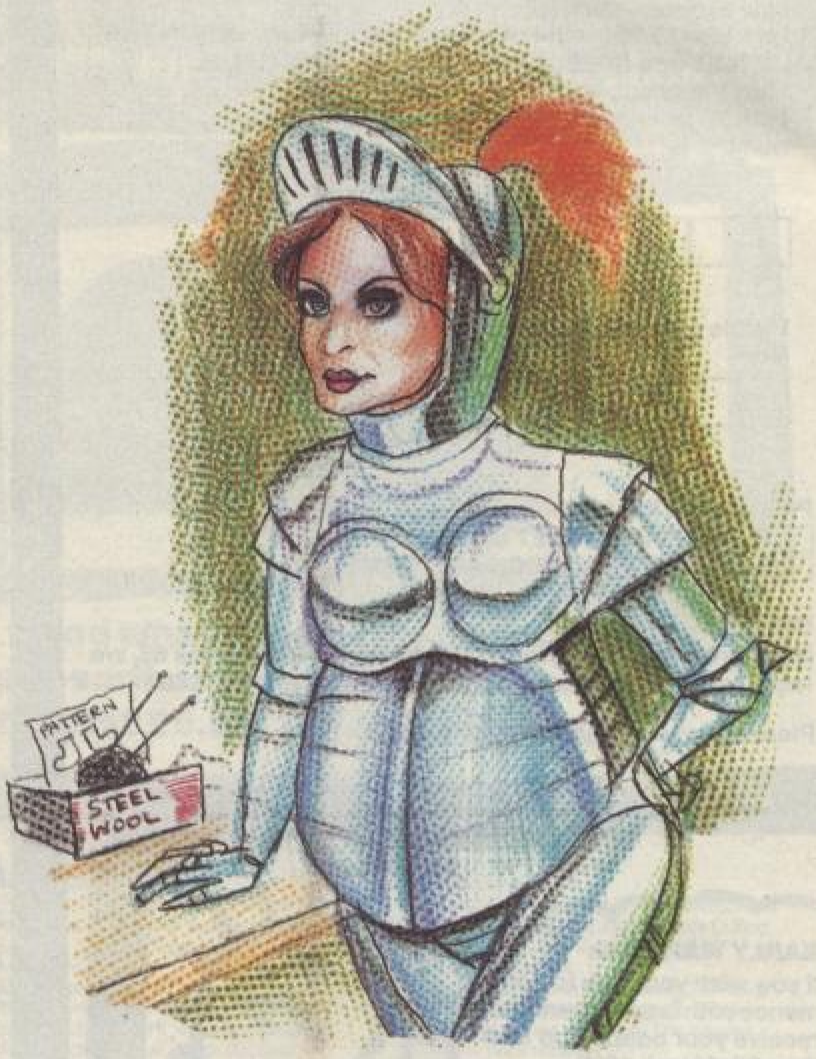
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At the turn of the century that new fangled gizmo, the X-ray machine, was installed in shoe shops so customers could see the bones of their toes wiggling in their new hush puppies. Forty years ago smoking was the healthy thing to do, promoted by movie stars like Ronald Reagan. Nowadays we know better, of course . . .



THE ZAPPING OF BRITAIN

After a brief spell as Father Christmas, MEL CROUCHER now returns in cape and tights as Captain Paranoia. The British Government, multinational electronics firms, the US Military – they're all out to get you. Unless you want your eyes to be hardboiled by the time you're 24, read the full exposé . . .

Nobody in their right minds would shove their head in a microwave oven and switch it on, would they? Nobody with any sense would keep a live x-ray machine as a household pet, would they? Nobody with any inside knowledge would stand for days on end in front of a radar dish until it fried their eyes out, or would they? As a matter of fact, they would. You would. You probably do, and I certainly do. My softening brain is no more than four feet from one such radiation source at this very moment. What I am talking about is my computer screen. What all these devices have in common is that they emit electromagnetic waves. These waves don't rip great wads of electrons off molecules the way nuclear bombs do, rather they leave them in place but give them a tickle. This sort of wave is known as 'non-ionising' radiation. It is not only seeping out of your monitor, it crops up all over the place: around power cables, TV transmitters, even light bulbs, and it is very, very dangerous stuff indeed.

Unlike most wave forms, these non-ionising waves don't occur in nature, and human beings have not had any time to develop any resistence to them. I am aware that some readers are going to accuse me of scare-mongering and sensationalism, so let me give you a few facts (and every one of them is well documented and proven).

ENERGY FOR DEATH

In 1954 a radio technician named **Sam Yannon** was working for the New York Telephone Company, when he was given the job of running TV transmissions from the top of the Empire State Building. By 1965, doctors began to suspect that some sort of electrical waves were affecting his sight, his hearing and his mind. When he died in 1974, he weighed less than five stone, and his brain and body had fallen to bits. Legal history was made when his widow was awarded huge damages from the company, who were accused of killing him off with non-ionising radiation. Since then the American lawyers have gone to town, hitting back at the techno-killers left, right and centre, and more importantly, winning cases against computer companies, radar operators and TV stations. In one spectacular case a Texas court ordered a telephone company to fork out $25 million compensation for stringing up power cables over a school playground. A link with leukaemia was found!

Today in the USA, the Soviet Union and several enlightened European countries, the running of power cables near civilian buildings is illegal. They understand the risks and have banned this stupid practice. In Britain, the Government still denies that there is a problem, with the result that there are no laws prohibiting it. With the privatisation of electricity coming up this is even more a cause for concern.

RAY-GUNS FOR THE NINETIES

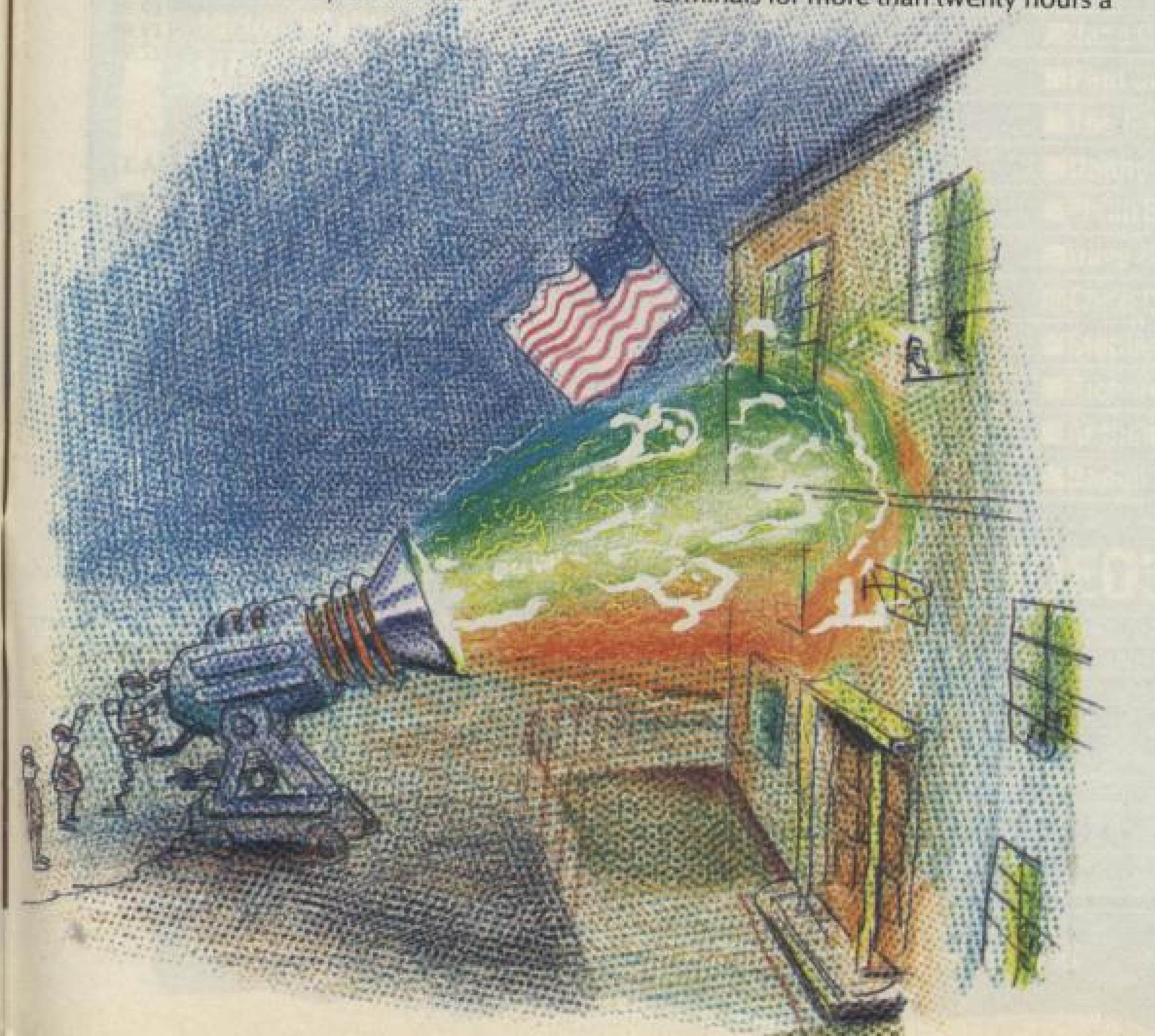
In 1959, a boffin from Czechoslovakia named **Karel Marha** used non-ionising rays on rats. The rodents got confused, then they

went crazy, and then proceeded to die of convulsions. In the same year, the Americans discovered that the Russians were bombarding their Embassy in Moscow with similar bonkers-beams, but didn't tell their own staff for twenty years, apparently because they did not have a clue how to deal with the death rays. 50% of their Ambassadorial staff subsequently died of cancer, and 25% developed rare blood diseases. Now, those diplomats who are still alive are suing the socks off their own government.

The Americans learned a lesson or two from the Russians, though, and the next generation of anti-personnel weapons is already is use. Yes, folks, Ray Guns have finally crawled off the sci-fi pages and into the modern military arsenal. But they ain't called lasers; in tribute to our sister magazine they're known as 'Zappers'.

Before these futuristic weapons could be used on the battlefield they had to be tested, of course, and where better than Greenham Common where a bunch of unarmed peace women were causing a bit of a ruckus. Since 1984 there have been 889 proven cases of the effects of Zapping on Greenham Women – all confirmed by doctors – including inability to move or think, sickness, irregular bleeding from the gums, nose and vagina (the latter in women aged over 60!), sunburn during the night and sensitivity to electrical objects like transistor radios and strip lights. When the Zapped women left the area around the missile base their symptoms disappeared, only to return when they were Zapped again. The code names for the weapons used are the Photic Drive, the Squawk Box and the Valkyrie.

This rather uncivilized scam was finally blown in December 1988, when the former Deputy Director of the US Defence Nuclear Agency, **Dr Theodore Taylor**, told a conference in London that the next generation of microwave weapons were already off the drawing boards. Taylor then proceeded to give details of what the doctors had already confirmed.



TECHNOSTRESSED

'But what's all this got to do with me playing computer games and using my word processor?' I hear you mumble. Keep reading, gentle reader, keep reading. The latest fashionable disease is something the media have labelled 'Yuppie Flu' – you feel lousy, your resistance to all the usual bugs is lowered, and you don't know what's causing it. Chances are you work or play with a computer.

The Health Ministry denies that there is any link. But in 1981 the National Institute of Occupational Safety and Health showed that certain groups of workers suffered what they called 'technostress'. The groups included air-traffic controllers, TV producers, radar operators and (very surprisingly) video typists. It was only after the report was published that the researchers realised what the hell technostress really was. At first they'd thought it was caused by the pressure of work, but then someone came up with a very simple equation: the longer a worker sat in front of a computer monitor, the worse the symptoms got. The most technostressed groups of all were not air-traffic controllers, who work short shifts, but VDU operators sitting in front of their machines all day, every day: people like typists, travel agents and (god help me) journalists. We were all voluntarily Zapping ourselves!

Suddenly, other facts and figures began to fall into place, such as the fact that four out of seven pregnancies in a single Canadian office (the *Toronto Star* newsroom, 1979) resulted in deformed babies. All the women used VDUs. More scientific research has resulted in hard evidence, none more so than the shocking results of a survey of 1583 pregnant Californian women, undertaken by **Kaiser Permanente** last June. This proved that pregnant women who worked at computer terminals for more than twenty hours a week run an 80% greater risk of miscarriages and giving birth to deformed babies, as compared to women who do similar jobs without using computers.

I am sad to report that although the evidence is overwhelming, and despite the fact that over 17 countries have now passed laws controlling the use of computers in the workplace, here in Britain we are taking no urgent action whatsoever. This is a national scandal! Are the lives of British computer users less valuable than those in Sweden, Russia or Italy? I think not. The first proper British study is under way in Reading, where the spontaneous abortion rate of up to 400 women VDU operators is being studied, and the results will be out later this year. Big deal! There is no need to wait for this report, because the evidence is already here. It was published last October by the **United Nations International Labour Organisation**, and CRASH readers might like to know what the United Nations has recommended should be *law* in Britain.

UNITED NATIONS ILO PROVISIONS & ME

The provisions are that:

- Computer operators should take a minimum ten minutes break after a maximum of two hours work. Preferably, VDU operators should have a 15 minute break after only one hour in front of a VDU.
- VDU work should not be longer than twenty hours a week, and it is recommended that the limit is four hours a day with a maximum set at six hours in any day.
- Computer operators should have an eye test before being stuck with a job that plonks them in front of a screen, with regular eye tests every three months. (The costs of these tests, as well as any necessary glasses or contact lenses should be paid for by the employer!)
- Pregnant women must have the option of being transferred to non-VDU work, without any loss of pay, promotion prospects or job status.
- Jobs should be designed so that computer work is alternated with other tasks to avoid boredom, stress and 'non-ionised' radiation hazards.
- Computer manufacturers should shield their machines from leaking electromagnetic radiation by shoving VDUs inside an earthed cage.

I reckon the chances of any of these items becoming law in the offices, schools and factories of Britain in the foreseeable future are less than zero. In fact, just as recently as December 7 of last year the **House of Lords** rejected the **European Commission**'s recommendation for VDU users, saying that they had no evidence that they are a health hazard. Such complacency is worrying to say the least.

But what you do in your own home, with regard to your own computer, is up to you. Make up your own minds, and maybe now you've read these facts you will change your computer habits. If you ignore them, the chances of you becoming a 'Technostressed Zapped' statistic are higher than mine, because I've just switched to a battery-powered LCD display machine for my work.

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CHARTS and SCORES

THE MARCH CHARTS

TOP 20 GAMES

1*(1)*	**ROBOCOP** *Ocean*	■**Chris Hewson**, Cheadle	**81210**
2*(3)*	**BATMAN** *Ocean*	■**John Price**, Lincoln	**100%/69%**
3*(4)*	**OPERATION WOLF** *Ocean*	■**Dale Berry**, Beccles	**535154**
4*(5)*	**R-TYPE** *Electric Dreams*	■**Gary Milne**, Milton Keynes	**83100**
5*(2)*	**THUNDER BLADE** *US Gold*	■**Shaun Clemens**, Plymouth	**105250**
6*(7)*	**AFTERBURNER** *Activision*	■**Simon Bodymore**, Chirk	**8252870**
7*(8)*	**DOUBLE DRAGON** *Melbourne House*	■**Richard Ward**, Farnborough	**92220**
8*(6)*	**TOTAL ECLIPSE** *Incentive*	■**Ian Leach**, Castleford	**1597500**
9*(11)*	**SAVAGE** *Firebird*	■**Matthew Lay**, Kennington	**3440**
10*(10)*	**RETURN OF THE JEDI** *Domark*	■**Jaco Cebula**, Dunfermline	**65000**
11*(15)*	**CYBERNOID II** *Hewson*	■**Paul Salkeld**, Chapeltown	**110000**
12*(13)*	**19 PART ONE – BOOT CAMP** *Cascade*	■**The Gamester**, Birmingham	**224754**
13*(9)*	**DALEY THOMPSON'S OLYMPIC CHALLENGE** *Ocean*	■**Danny Fox**, Hampton Magna	**786942**
14*(12)*	**FOXX FIGHTS BACK** *Imageworks*	■**Philip Brown**, Reading	**97150**
15*(16)*	**PAC-MANIA** *Grandslam*	■**Dave Collins**, Liverpool	**478,450**
16*(19)*	**MATCH DAY II** *Ocean*	■**Chris Delahunty**, Thetford	**6-0**
17*(►)*	**ROADBLASTERS** *US Gold*	■**Stephen Thwaites**, Keswick	**947230**
18*(20)*	**BIONIC COMMANDO** *GO!/Capcom*	■**Richard Walton**, Ashford	**290300**
19*(18)*	**TARGET; RENEGADE** *Imagine*	■**Anthony Brown**, Oldham	**1642900**
20*(►)*	**CYBERNOID** *Hewson*	■**Daniel Blunden**, Luckfield	**84801**

TOP 10 MUSIC

1*(1)*	**LED STORM** *GO!/Capcom*	■*Tim Follin*
2*(4)*	**CYBERNOID** *Hewson*	■*Dave Rogers*
3*(2)*	**JOE BLADE II** *Players*	
4*(5)*	**AMAUROTE** *Mastertronic*	■*Dave Whittaker*
5*(3)*	**BIONIC COMMANDO** *GO!/Capcom*	■*Tim Follin*
6*(8)*	**CYBERNOID II** *Hewson*	■*Dave Rogers*
7*(6)*	**ROBOCOP** *Ocean*	■*Jonathan Dunn*
8*(7)*	**PAC-MANIA** *Grandslam*	■*Ben Daglish*
9*(10)*	**OPERATION WOLF** *Ocean*	■*Jonathan Dunn*
10*(9)*	**TARGET; RENEGADE** *Imagine*	■*Gary Biasillo*

TOP 10 VIDEOS

1*(1)*	**ROBOCOP** *Virgin*	■*Peter Weller tackles a ruthless gang*
2*(3)*	**PREDATOR** *CBS/Fox*	■*More renegade action from Schwarzenegger*
3*(2)*	**E.T.** *CIC*	■*Spielberg's lost alien phones home*
4*(►)*	**STAKEOUT** *Touchstone*	■*Two cops spy on Madeline Stowe*
5*(6)*	**THE UNTOUCHABLES** *CIC*	■*De Palma's classy gangster movie*
6*(–)*	**THE WITCHES OF EASTWICK** *Warner*	■*Three women meet devilish Jack Nicholson*
7*(►)*	**THREE MEN AND A BABY** *Touchstone*	■*Batchelor trio go gaga over infant*
8*(►)*	**SUSPECT** *RCA/Columbia*	■*Tense drama starring Cher*
9*(4)*	**PLATOON** *RCA/Columbia*	■*Oliver Stone's Oscar-winning 'Nam film*
10*(►)*	**DEATH WISH IV: THE CRACKDOWN** *Cannon*	■*Bronson administers more 'justice'*

For information on Charts and Scores and how to cast your vote, turn to page 93.

PBM

RATS, PUCKS, BALLS AND POP

Relieved to be back to his full page IAN LACEY takes a look at some distinctly off-beat PBM games . . .

WELL I don't know about you but I can't wait for April's **4th British PBM Convention**, to be held at an as yet undecided London address. It should be a good event, so be there! Now on with the reviews.

WHERE'S ROLAND?

Car racing seems a strange subject for PBM, but ***RatRacing*** proves to be a pretty fun game. For your £3 start-up fee you get two rulebooks, one with essential game rules, the other with an amusing and informative running commentary.

All the racing drivers are different people, created by the players' distribution of points amongst various driving skills (cornering, overtaking etc). However, the cars – or Rats as they are called – all drive the same; four wheels and electric engines with left-hand button for braking, right-hand button for accelerating. This means it's up to the drivers' skills and judgement, not the cars' abilities.

Turn results come in two sections. First you receive a personal results sheet with detailed analysis of every manoeuvre you made in the race, a final placings list, 'extra activities' and an updated character analysis. The second part of the turn results goes to all players and is a commentary on the race.

The quantity and quality of information in the turns represents good value for money at £1.25 a throw. Moreover, every other turn you receive a map of the next two racing circuits with their cornering speeds and braking distances. These are used when you write your orders. You decide whether to go faster or slower, or to brake earlier or later than recommended. Many other features affect performance though, such as morale, skills, health and reactions. Overall, *RatRacing* is very enjoyable with computer-moderation to give fast and unbiased results. I think it deserves a larger audience than it has seen to date. £3.00 start-up fees should be made payable to **Darren Cook** at *RatRacing*, **92 Cromer Road, Hellesdon, Norwich, Norfolk, NR6 6XN.**

ON ICE

Slapshot is an ice hockey simulation from **Tactics Play By Mail Games**. The game remains very true to the sport, using the rules, jargon and team names. For your £5 start-up fee you get an A4 rulebook explaining the rules of ice hockey and the PBM game. Best of all, though, is the wealth of info gained with each turn. You get a turnsheet; a description of your next opponent's playing strategy; a detailed report of your last game; less detailed reports on all league games, an update on the league tables and occasionally a newsletter with lists of the league's best players; rumours; news and reports from the college ice hockey scene so you know which rookies to look out for. Obviously that lot doesn't come cheap, but I think it warrants the £2 price tag. A great game if you're anything of an ice hockey fan and a lot of fun even if you're not. Contact: Tactics PBM, **25 Low Friar St., Newcastle-upon-Tyne, Tyne & Wear NE1 5UE.**

BE ELTON JOHN

Ideal Games is the creation of **Dan McCrossan** and begins trade with the launch of two computer-moderated PBM games. The first is a rather run-of-the-mill football manager game called ***Soccer Boss***, still its presentation is above-average and the price is appealing. Start-up is totally free which gets you a nice, although pretty brief, rulebook and a starting position. From then on turns are 80p per fortnight for two or more matches.

Their second game is a simulation of the pop world! ***Pop Star*** has you as a singer, or band, desperate to top the charts. With good videos, stage performances, TV appearances and lots of boasting you too can try and con your way to stardom. Alternatively you could try writing good songs, but why bother? Nobody else seems to! The price is the same as *Soccer Boss*, and the address is: **Dan McCrossan, Ideal Games, 72 Townsend Street, Strabane, Co Tyrone, N Ireland BT82 8HY.**

DORMITARY FANTASIES

The latest computer-moderated fantasy wargame from **Games Laboratory** is ***Magelords Of Dorm***. Set on the planet Dorm (originally designed for their RPG *Further Into Fantasy*), players act as major leaders of a Dormian army. The action takes place on an island, a rough map of which is provided in the rulebook. The map shows the position of fifty settlements. On your turnsheets a computerised version of the map gradually builds up as you explore. At first you seem very isolated, but in truth the other magelords are only four or five squares away. Fighting starts quickly, getting rid of weaker magelords and setting play up for later stages. The object of the game is to become the one ruling magelord. This is accomplished by controlling a hundred squares for three consecutive turns.

You control your entire economy and war effort. It is also possible to intervene in your armies' actions by lending moral or physical support using magik. You control your armies with a choice of five actions combined with six strategies, and a choice of eight directions. It is possible to control forty armies, but you can only order three – so you must get your priorities right near the game's end. You may also hire heroes to fight alongside your army generals for extra power.

Magelords Of Dorm is a great fantasy wargame. The start-up package contains a high quality 32-page A5 rulebook, two free turns, a list of other players' names and addresses and a postcard-style starting sheet. The text is a little confused, but creates a great atmosphere, and the game is easy to get into. Normally a start-up pack costs £1, but **The Games Laboratory** have agreed to let us have 50 free start-ups. To get one draw, or write a description of, a Magelord of Dorm. it doesn't have to be a long description or great picture, just so long as it's got atmosphere. Send your entries, or (if you're not artistically inclined) a cheque for £1, to The Game Laboratory, **PO Box 127 Swindon, Wiltshire SN3 6PW.**

That's my lot, and if you decide to go to the convention why not look out for a neatly presented individual (smart clothes, polished shoes, slick hair, cleanly shaven etc.) . . . he should know where I am if you fancy a chat!

COMMS



This month CRASH's very own Comms Gnome, PAUL EVANS, takes a look at a rival to Micronet . . .

FINALLY! I can breathe again, back to a whole page, hurrah! Now how about a tour of an alternative world to Prestel. It has the rather unusual title of ***The Gnome At Home***. This system is, without doubt, the most famous independent database on-line.

HEADLESS GNOMES

The Gnome At Home started around 1983, with software custom-written by the Sysop (codename!), and has been growing ever since. It now supports contributors, who can rent frames and start up Special Interest Groups (SIGs). Recently subscriptions began to be charged, with special benefits for subscribers, and the system so popular it's hard to get a connection. A large part of its appeal is the widespread humour, with every *n* preceded by a *g*, in typical gnome fashion.

I used one of the two 'free' lines for unregistered users (I'm joining soon!). Once you have registered your name, you get your head bitten by the Auto-Gnome (Aug). This beast makes sure nobody hogs the lines, preventing other users from accessing the board. When you first enter the system, Aug tells you how busy the lines are and gives you a time to leave by. Time allowed varies from a couple of hours to just half a hour. Aug also tells you about recently-updated areas and special offers from Sysop.

Back in the main menu you can enter the grotto. This is a funnier version of the Micronet Gallery: an area where users can hire pages and fill them with anything they please! Among the options are news files from user groups, sports enthusiasts and choc-net, which suffers from being very silly!

Next comes the gnews – a general information centre showing routes to masses of updates and useful topics. For the talkative person, the Babble Boards are a must. Babble Boards allow users to leave messages for others to read.

SUBSCRIBE GNOW

The Gnome At Home is a standard Viewdata system, meaning anyone who uses Prestel should have no problem connecting at a baud rate of 1200/75. It's free to use, but only two phone lines are available to the non-paying users, so logging-on this way could be a bit of a pain! Also, free users are denied certain facilities. However, it's useful if you don't intend using *Gnome* that often.

Now for the subscriptions. If you subscribe to *The Gnome At Home* then you get the following:-

★A separate line from free users that will only be engaged at the busiest of times.

★No Auto-Gnome! Yes, Aug will allow you on-line for very long periods, even when it's busy.

★A chatline! Talk happily to other subscribers with no extra charges!

★An advanced mailbox system for sending messages across the network. You can create your own graphic MBX header that will be shown at the top of your message.

★Rent frames for your own SIG or grotto and edit them!

A further attraction is the recent availability of free telesoftware for the Speccy. New features soon to be launched include a bulk uploading facility for editors of SIGs or grottoes; this will allow the editor (or Sub-Ip) to transmit pre-created frames at high speed to the main computer, saving on phone bills! Also, dynamic frames (basic animation) will soon be available.

Now for the hole-in-the-pocket time . . .

Subscriptions	3 Months	– £4.50
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Babble Board	To Buy	– £5.00

To try out *The Gnome At Home* phone **01 888 8894**. It's open 24 hours a day, seven days a week! And if you want to subscribe write off to **Autonomic Systems, 3 Park View Gardens, White Hart Lane, Wood Green LONDON N22 5SH.**

SHADEY BUSINESS

One of the newest and most important sections is the SIGs. Earlier this year, the SIG database was set up for would-be contributors to share their knowledge with others, at little expense. Immediately after this area was opened, many regulars from Micronet moved into *Gnome* so that non-Micronet subscribers could benefit from their vast knowledge. Two particular 'Net SIGs have made a prominent appearance, **Spectacular** and **16/32**, Speccy and ST databases respectively. Both are excellent reading, Spectacular (no connection to the fanzine) is one of the top areas on Micronet for Spectrum owners and *Gnome* has a carbon copy of it continually updated, with a letter section for you to use as well.

Recently a PBM was started on the system, using mailboxes instead of Her Majesty's mail. A game similar to *Shades* may not be far off! This is just a very brief run-down on what's available, the whole thing is massive and the main menu is a poor reflection. Moreover, the fact that it's a database written by enthusiasts makes it a true 'work of heart'.



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ZX SPECTRUM

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Et Al

GOGGLE!

Planes, trains and Rivers!!

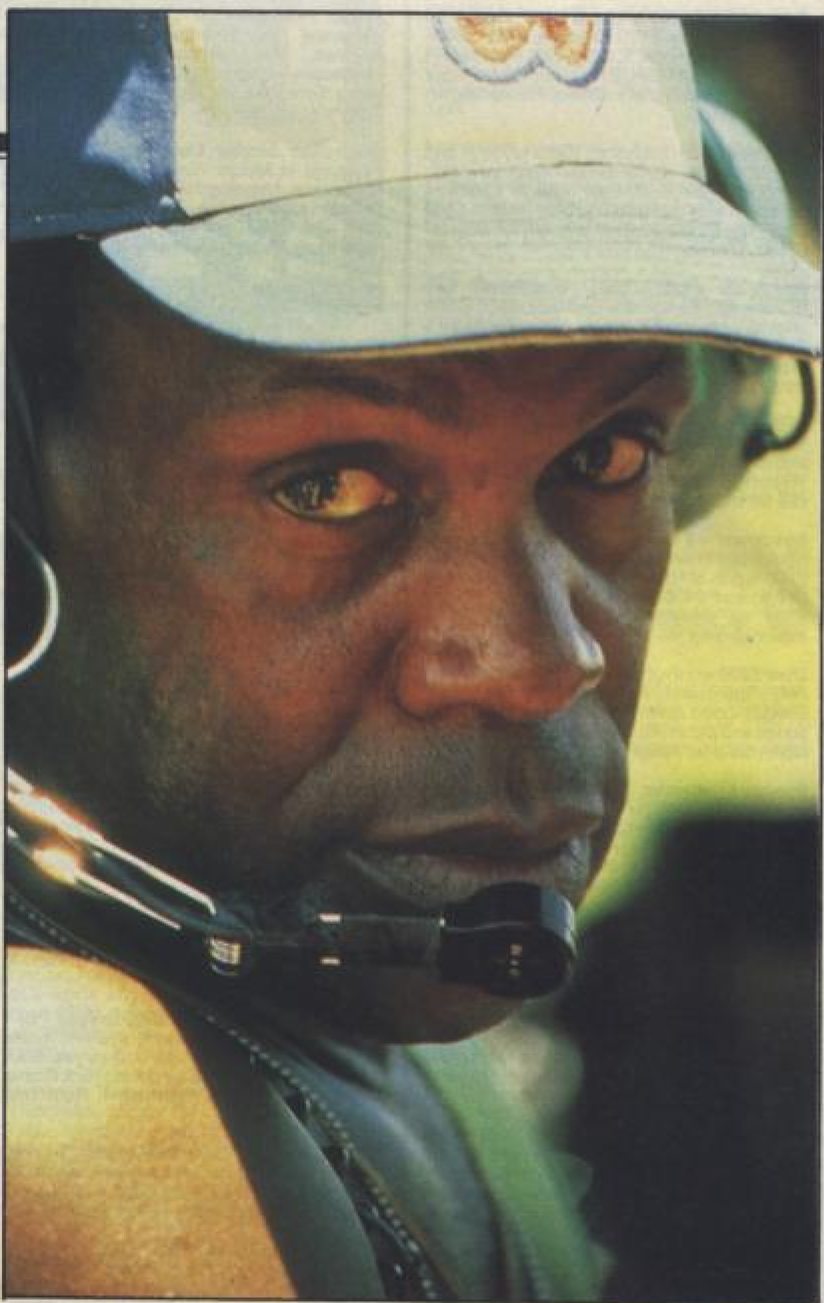


A packed *Et Al* this month, without room even to mention another £9.99 Warner range; the seven film *Agatha Christie Collection.* (Oh whoops, I just did!)

RENTAL

If ***Planes, Trains And Automobiles*** (CIC) took only a matter of months to write, compared to years for *Roxanne,* then all the more credit to **John Hughes** for producing, directing and writing the latter, a minor comedy classic. The story concerns sophisticated business man **Steve Martin** and slobbish travelling-salesman **John Candy**. All they want is to be home for Thanksgiving, a humble enough desire which rapidly turns into a nightmare of modern transport. While the plot has some loose ends, the relationship between the two characters is both hilarious and, eventually, genuinely moving, due to superb performances by both actors. Thanks in no small part to them, director John Hughes (*The Breakfast Club, Ferris Bueller's Day Off*) has moved into the big league (a $30 million budget) in style.

An American trying to avoid big budget movies is **Harrison Ford**, a star in five of the top ten grossing – and special effects-packed – films in cinema history. Of late he's been more concerned with films emphasizing character acting rather than special effects – he turned down *Who Framed Roger Rabbit* – and it's his performance in ***Frantic*** (15, Warner) which saves it. The story is that Ford's wife has been kidnapped in Paris. Ford sets out to find her and soon runs into a complex plot involving terrorists, nuclear weapons and **Emmanuelle Seigner**. The latter isn't half bad, although Ford suspects she may not have his best interests at heart. Ford's marriage obviously limits their relationship – reducing romantic interest – while the thriller is overly complex. Nevertheless Ford is always interesting, and director **Roman Polanski** makes sure the film looks good.







A more ambitiously-plotted thriller is ***A Prayer For The Dying*** (18, Vestron). It stars **Mickey Rourke** as an IRA terrorist trying to make a fresh start, with the help of **Bob Hoskins**. Originally intended to open a prominent UK film festival in 1988, the movie soon became lost in controversy over the IRA, brutality and cuts made by the producers over the vehement objections of the director and Rourke. These cuts have turned a half-serious film into a rather mindless thriller. Still, on video it may well be worth investigating.

And talking of mindless violence there's ***Rambo III*** (18, Guild). The plot isn't noticeably more complex than the computer game; **Sylvester Stallone** is called back into action by the capture of his friend in Afghanistan. The rescue attempt involves Rambo destroying half the Russian Army single-handed. Released to coincide with the Russian withdrawal from Afghanistan this is for Stallone fans only.

A more interesting treatment of war, this time in Vietnam, is presented in ***Bat 21*** (15, Guild). US Colonel **Gene Hackman** has been shot down over hostile territory. **Danny Glover** is a spotter plane pilot in radio communication with



Hackman and his would-be rescuers. Amazing aerial photograph, constant suspense and good acting make this an above-average thriller worth renting.

Also worth a look is ***Saigon*** (18, CBS/Fox). As tends to happen in thrillers prostitutes are being brutally murdered and, belatedly, the cops investigate. **Willem Dafoe** and **Gregory Hines** are the cynical cops becoming more cynical by the minute. Unlike most American thrillers the corruption and evil-doing is not limited to the lower ranks and one bad general – the whole US system in Saigon comes to seem repulsive. A believable and involving thriller.

A less dramatic, but more touching and realistic film stars *Stand By Me*'s **River Phoenix** in a thoughtful examination of teenage angst. Despite a poor box office reception ***Jimmy Reardon*** (PG, Sony) is a film worthy of serious attention.

FOR SALE

In space no-one can hear you scream, 'why the heck did it take so long?' A decade after its cinema release **Ridley Scott**'s chilling classic has finally been put out on video for £9.99. ***Alien*** (18, CBS/Fox) is not only a taut, brilliantly directed sci-fi thriller, it's also a dazzling example of the director's visual genius. The Nostromo spaceship is realistic and immensely claustrophobic, while the two featured alien cultures caused a revolution in sci-fi films. And on top of all that there's a plot of classic simplicity, bleakly insisting humans are far more predictable than we like to pretend.

Also out is ***Aliens***, the sequel directed by **James Cameron** (*The Terminator*). A great action movie it succeeds by the rather unambitious technique of pitting some Vietnam veterans (complete with 20th century shotguns) against a lot of very stupid aliens. And, like **Sigourney Weaver**, the effects are generally stunning (although Cameron has a weakness for crude, and obvious back-projection FX, like where the dropship comes to grief).

Bat 21 star Danny Glover also stars in ***Lethal Weapon*** (£9.99, 18, Warner) with **Mel Gibson**. A fairly routine thriller in terms of plot, it's made into something special by its stars and fast pace.

Talking of Vietnam brings us to the first big 'Nam film of 1987, ***Platoon***. Oliver Stone's first major movie tells the story of the bloody war through the eyes of a grunt (foot soldier), played by ***Charlie Sheen***. It was only released on rental a year ago, so £9.99 seems great value (although it is on satellite TV this month!).

Even more stars (**Michael Douglas**, **Kathleen Turner** and **Danny De Vito**), feature in ***Jewel Of The Nile*** which moves *Romancing The Stone*'s action to the Middle East. Some spectacular scenes, such as that involving an F-16 jet fighter, compensate for a forgettable plot.

A Room With A View, by contrast, has a strong and original, if somewhat slow plot which is genuinely amusing and enjoyable. Excellent photography makes good use of the beautiful and highly-talented **Helen Bonham Carter**.

Finally we have **Stephen King**'s ***Stand By Me*** (RCA/Columbia), a story about four teenagers taking a trip through the countryside and learning much about life in the process.

THE FORM

CHARTS

FAVOURITE GAME ....

FAVOURITE MUSIC **48K/128K**

FAVOURITE VIDEO ....

Each month we compile three charts: top computer games, top computer music and top video films. So, why not take part in the most accurate way of finding out what everybody's playing – not just hype-filled sales charts! So get those entries in as soon as possible. Any ridiculously old games will not be dealt with favourably.

SCORES

GAME 1 ....

....

GAME 2 ....

....

GAME 3 ....

....

Next to each chart-topping game we also print a score to aim for. This score is calculated (very mathematically) with the aid of Phil King's computer. The person nearest to the target score of the month will get their name and score printed in the corresponding issue of CRASH. Now, it's impossible to cheat! (We hope . . .)

THE INFO

Filled in the voting bit? Well, now all you have to do is fill in all the required information below, cut-out – or photocopy – your didactic (LMLWD) votes and send them to: **The Form, CRASH Towers, PO Box 10, LUDLOW, Shropshire SY8 1DB**.

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THE NEXT ISSUE

of CRASH will contain yet more **exclusives** (but we're not saying what, or someone else'll nick 'em) and FANTASTIC feature on *The Real Ghostbusters*, plus a superb compo that'll blow your mind (well, you'll be pretty impressed). They'll also be a SUPERB pull-out poster feature, a report on the Arcade Convention in London and a VERY SPECIAL SURPRISE (we're not giving much away, are we?). Be sure to look out for the next issue of CRASH. (Cor! It sounds so good, I think I'll take out a CRASH subscription! – Dom.) (Another satisfied customer – Ed Stuart. No, not Ed Stewart, dimwit!)

On Sale March 30



Of all the promo pictures found at the recent Toy Fair in London, *Molly*'s bears were definitely the best. Night, night, and sleep tight till next munf . . .

PREVIEWS

GETTING CARRIED AWAY

Carrier Command is **Rainbird**'s version of the Stealth bomber – immensely complicated, massively delayed, and still not finished.

Demos of the 95% finished game have cropped up in the CRASH offices from time to time and are amazingly detailed and quick. The sea, islands, buildings and carriers are portrayed in solid 3-D, while the Mantas and Walrus vehicle are represented by wireframe graphics. If you want you can have three aircraft circling the carrier, three Walruses trundling over an island, and switch to cockpit views of any of the vehicles, taking direct joystick control if you like. With so much happening the speed is unbelievable and perfectly smooth.

That Realtime push the Spectrum to even more spectacular limits will be no surprise to older Spectrum owners. Their first game was *3D Tank Duel*, released in 1984 it remains probably the best *Battle Zone*-type game on the Spectrum. Eight months later they released a dazzling version of the *Star Wars* coin-op called *Starstrike*, its state-of-the-art vector graphics helped earn a CRASH Smash. *Starstrike II* earned another Smash with different gameplay and filled-in 3D graphics. All these games were published by Realtime themselves, but in 1986 they teamed up with Rainbird, for which they wrote the Spectrum conversion of the ST stunner *Starglider*. Their conversion improved playability and earned the 128K version a 97% Smash. Splitting royalties for that game with the ST programmers, Argonaut, convinced Realtime that they should program their own ST hit; *Carrier Command*.

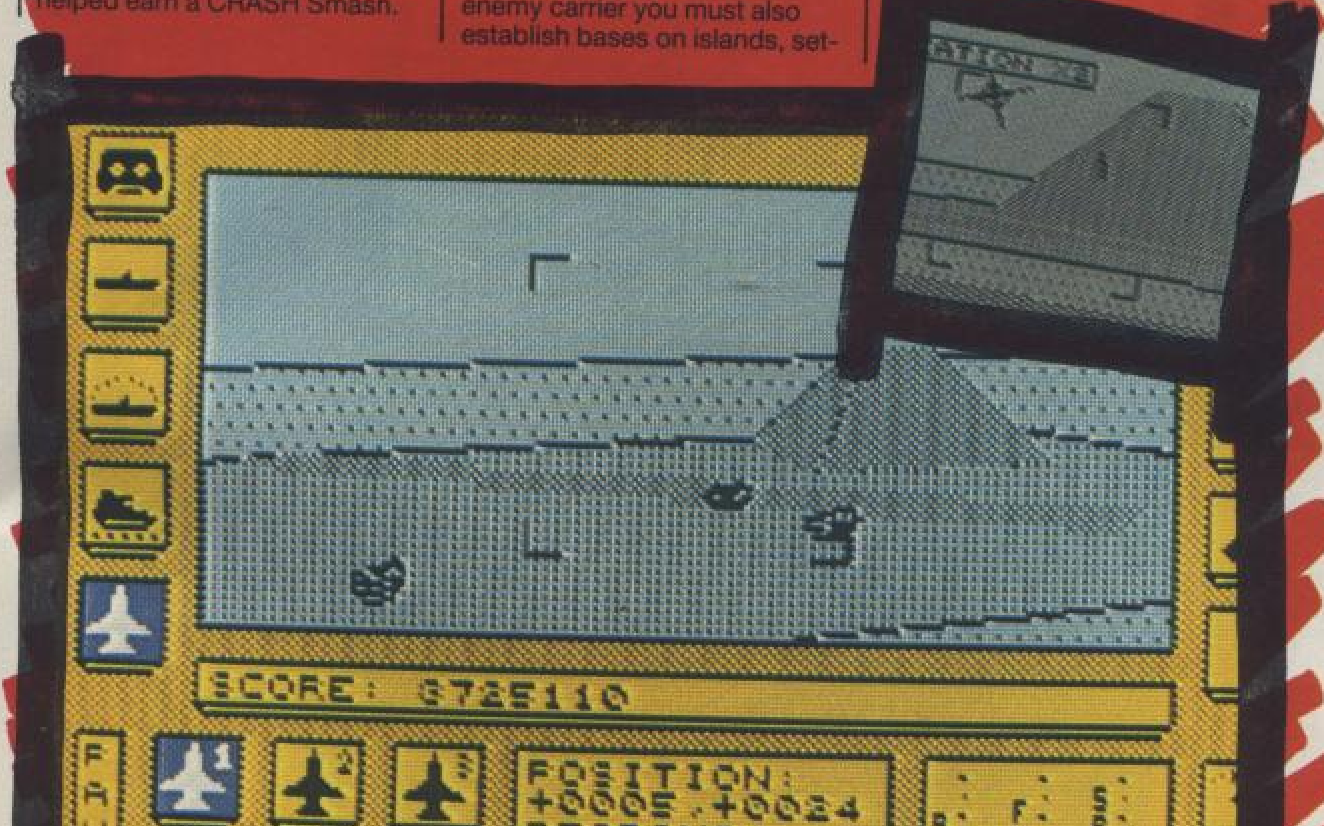
The game's scenario features two aircraft carriers and 32 islands. The first carrier was supposed to turn the islands into geothermal energy producers, but an evil organization hacked into its computers and turned the robot carrier into a fearsome war machine, making islands into defence installations.

Your carrier – like the enemy ship – is equipped with a laser gun and ship-to-surface missiles, plus three Manta aircraft and three Walrus amphibious tanks. You can either take direct control of these vehicles or order them to go to certain places. Besides hunting down the enemy carrier you must also establish bases on islands, setting up factories to produce supplies for you. You can also invade enemy islands, taking on their fighter planes and anti-aircraft missiles, to turn them into supply bases for yourself.

As you can see from the screenshots there's plenty of icons to learn and use, but many of the icons access subscreens with whole new sets of icons. Subscreens include; ship repairs, Manta/Walrus armaments, strategy/resource map, factory production priorities and defence drone deployment. While initially baffling, a quick peruse of the hefty instruction manual makes everything marvellously clear.

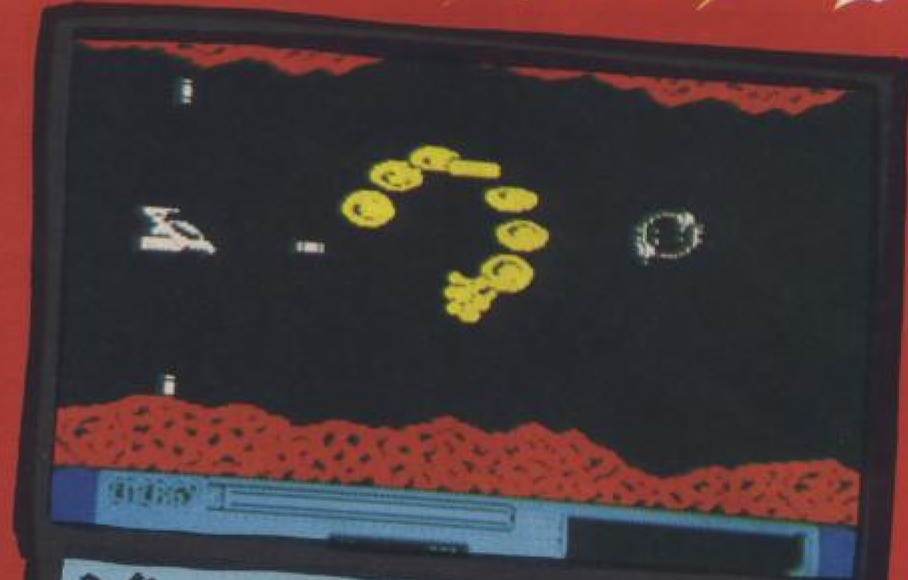
There are also two types of game selectable, strategy and tactical. In the strategy game all the islands are neutral and the carriers are at opposite ends of the map. By contrast, the tactical game begins with most of the islands controlled by one carrier or the other, and the carriers relatively close together. There are also two types of victory: tactical (you destroy the enemy carrier), and strategic (you capture all of the islands as well).

Both games will take some time, and lots of SAVEs, to complete, and promise to be the ultimate in 3-D gameplay. This strategic/tactical/arcade masterpiece will, hopefully, be reviewed next issue. If the gameplay is as good as the programming it could well be THE game of 1989. Unfortunately it may only be available on 128K machines (£14.95/£15.95).



PREVIEWS



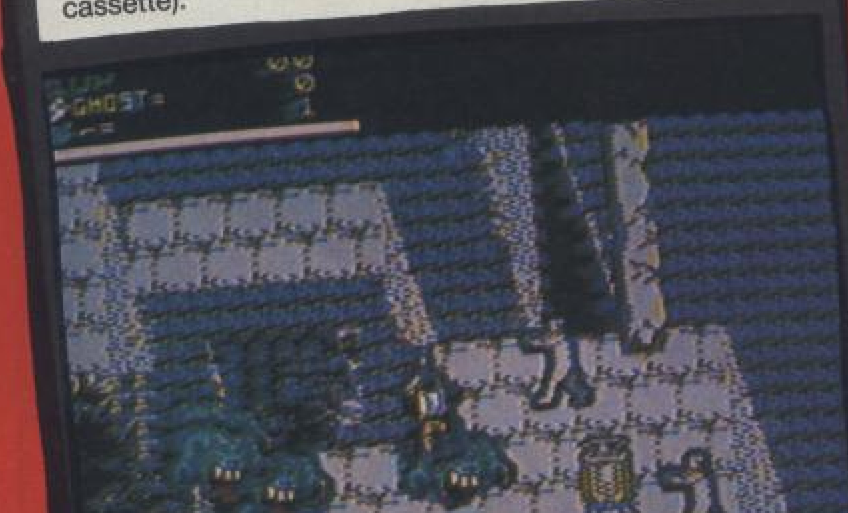


You've read the preview (last month), you've entered the competition, now look at the picture! It's ***DNA Warrior*** from those crazy folks at Cascade. Travel through the insides of a human being searching for the writers of Cascade's classic compilation, *Cassette 50* . . .





When there's something strange in your neighbourhood, who're you gonna call? Well, not any stupid actors like Bill Murray. No, you want ***The Real Ghostbusters***, the guys, ghost and secretary the movie was based on. The 'real' ghostbusting computer game is due out soon from **Activision** and could well smash the mega sales established by the game-of-the-film. If you want to join them in their fearless exploits, taming all the paranormal force daily disrupting life in New York City, start saving now (£9.99 cassette).



Due out soon is ***Incredible Shrinking Sphere***. The strange-sounding game involves a 3-D maze where the idea is to move your sphere from A to B without running foul of the numerous pits and traps that have been set to destroy unwary players like yourself. Search it out soon from your local computer stockist priced £9.99/£14.99, from **Electric Dreams**.





Even more balls feature in **Electric Dreams**' ***Time Scanner***, a pinball game licensed from a Sega original. There are four levels, Volcano, Saquarra, Ruins and Final. Each level is split into two parts (an upper and lower 'deck'); features include realistic nudge and tilt, multi-ball facility and a special final bonus screen. The game should hit the streets in April priced at £9.99/£14.99.



Back in 1985 the Atari Corporation was split into Atari Corp (home computers) and Atari Games (arcade machines). Since the former still makes home computer games, the latter uses the **Tengen** name for home computer conversions of its arcade hits. Domark have handled three Tengen products already – the superb *Star Wars* trilogy – and have now signed a three-year contract with Atari Games to convert more games, with more emphasis on the Tengen name. Five coin-op conversions are planned for 1989, the first being ***Vindicators***. The year is 2525 and the Tangent Empire is threatening life as we know it. So you leap into your trusty SR-88 Strategic Tank, conveniently located inside an enemy space station and set about seeking out and destroying its control centre. There are 14 space stations in all, each fully equipped with automatic defence systems!

Armoured tanks, and turrets take pot shots at your vehicle, whilst laser gates and mines provide the player with some sticky situations when trying to manoeuvre. Your tank is tough, but you are occasionally allowed to customize your vehicle to make it even tougher. The amount of modifications you're allowed depends on how many Battle Stars you have. Available in March at £9.99/£14.99.

Here's just a quick glimpse of **Grandslam**'s ***Pac-Land***. Yes, after a couple of excursions on an arcade board and on a TV cartoon, the lovable grapefruit is back. Originally released on the C64 over a year ago (and featured on 1987's CRASH Christmas cover), the tale follows Paccie on a trek through the colourful (well, on the 64 it was) surroundings of his home land of Pac-Land. For some inexplicable reason, Pac-Man has just rescued a fairy and must return home as soon as possible . . . 'er in doors has a few pac-pills in the oven. Watch out for all your old favourites, including the ghosts, when it reaches the Spectrum next month.





PREVIEWS

FIGHTING FIT!

Christmas 1988 saw OCEAN swamping the opposition, its software flagships *Operation Wolf* and *RoboCop* coming first and second in the Gallup charts. Those CRASH Smashes have already been followed up by another in this issue, *Run The Gauntlet*, and there are plans for many more. CRASH investigates . . .

Ocean's Central Manchester offices share building space with a church and are appropriately divided into a kind of heaven and hell. Above ground there's the airy open-plan offices of the PR staff with strong strip-lights and a beautiful glass roof. Underground, beyond a heavy fire door, there's the distinctly less well-lit work space of the inhouse programmers. Most of the programmers work in one large area, divided only partially by walls, with long, wooden benches permanently burdened with computers, joysticks, coffee cups and discarded gizmos.

Most of the development work is done on Atari STs, with unfinished Spectrum games being directly loaded into +2s from coffee-stained STs. One of the most impressive demos was ***Renegade 3: The Final Chapter***. While **Andrew Deakin** loaded the game in, **Ivor Horn** explained the game's concept. The *Renegade* series had started with a conversion of a coin-op beat-'em-up, followed by an original two-player sequel – *Target; Renegade*. The third, and definitely the final game will be another sideways scrolling, multiload beat-'em-up, but with smaller character graphics allowing upper and lower floors to be shown. Gameplay is to be much more sophisticated, with lots of strange creatures having their own, unique attack patterns. The scenario has yet to be fully worked out, but will involve a single player time-travelling through four levels; Prehistoric Times, Ancient Egypt, Medieval Times and The Future. Each level will be ten screens long and colour is to be added to liven things up. The first two *Renegade* games were programmed by **Mike Lamb**, and the programmers of *Operation Wolf* and *Rambo III* clearly hope to do just as well with the third.



▲ Arnie giving fellow Muscovites some *Red Heat*

The next preview to go on show was from an outside programming team – **Special FX** – previously responsible for *Firefly* and the latest *Batman* game. Very much in its early stages the game version of Arnold Schwarzenegger's ***Red Heat*** is essentially another multiloaded beat-'em-up. Its presentation is unique however, with the play area taking up only half the screen to achieve a cinematic, widescreen effect. The lower half of the screen will apparently show an audience watching the movie/game in progress. Also remarkable is the animation of Arnie, with muscles flexing across his shoulders at every punch.

Another film licence is being developed by inhouse programmers **Mike Lamb** and **Dawn Drake**. They work in a long, narrow office still dominated by a cardboard *RoboCop* and a TV/video setup. Last month they went down to Pinewood Studios to catch up on the development of the new, $30 million ***Batman*** film, still heavily shrouded in secrecy it stars **Michael Keaton** as Batman and **Jack Nicholson** as The Joker. Graphic artist Dawn was impressed by the film's dark, brooding atmosphere but Mike was upset to find some key action scenes he'd planned to turn into subgames had been changed. At the moment all that was to be seen was an impressively-musculed Batman sprite swinging around the *RoboCop* factory (we're assured that a new background is to be designed!). Both film and game are set for an August release date and, fingers crossed, should be excellent.

In a more advanced state of development is ***The Untouchables***, this will have six stages including the famous shoot-out in the railway station. The game has been storyboarded just as happened with *Platoon*, but the game isn't due out until September at the earliest. Ocean expect it to be big, so programmer **James Higgins** and graphic artist **Martin McDonald** have a lot on their plates.

Other Ocean games planned remain as closely-guarded as the *Batman* plot. No doubt there'll be yet more movie licences and hopefully more conversions of Taito coin-ops such as the *Op Wolf* sequel *Operation Thunderbolt*, and the very impressive *Chase HQ*. For more information on these exciting new arcade games check out next month's arcade section.

▼ A million years BC and Matt's still wearing his 501s and sunglasses





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